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THE NEW CREATION

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THE NEW CREATION

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INTRODUCTION

In a previous book of mine, *In Understanding Be Men,* I have supplied in a very rapid survey some of the principal points in systematic theology.

Systematic theology does not arrive at its conclusions independently. It professes to subject itself to the biblical presentation. Yet, while this is or ought to be the fact, there is a difference between systematic and biblical theology. As pointed out in my previous book, the biblical form of theology is mainly inductive in its method, while systematic or dogmatic theology is mainly deductive.

In the present work the student is invited to consider the Bible statements regarding "The New Creation" and from them to form a sound induction. Systematic theology is not ignored, but its findings are considered in the light of relevant scripture passages. The interpretations which have been presented on these serious topics by various schools of thought are, of necessity, very condensed. It is hoped, however, that no serious misrepresentation has been allowed to creep into the text.

Whenever an important topic is studied it is necessary to pass in review a fairly wide range of scripture passages which deal with it. Different readers will offer different interpretations of some or all of these passages. Because of this it becomes apparent very early that some effort must be made to connect the various passages under review in a consistent whole: to remove apparent contradictions and to effect a harmony of one passage with another.

If our study of Scripture is to be at all extensive we discover very early that we are in process of forming a creed, however limited the creed may be. Certain well-known interpretations are accepted by certain groups of Christians. In this way we have made known to us "views" of divine revelation. These views demand careful consideration. They represent possible interpretations of specific truths which receive large treatment in Scripture.

Yet another fact quickly emerges. We discover that "views" which are more definitely associated with well-defined Christian groups influence those who by ordinary affinities are connected with other groups.

Naturally this type of syncretism becomes more frequent when readers of devotional and theological writings range over a wide area and do not confine themselves to writers belonging to their own particular affiliation. Most modern expositors display the effect of such wide reading. Syncretism is valuable in protecting us from narrow and unduly restricted views of divine truth. It is also dangerous, if

unchecked by careful study, because it may easily lead us to adopt current opinions without subjecting them to proper scrutiny. It does not always follow that what many believe is undoubtedly true.

The same law operates here that operates in the formation and development of the historic creeds of Christendom. It may help to express this more clearly. After lengthy discussion the final verdict of the whole or a large portion of Christendom is embodied in a credal statement. The statement itself, after formulation, becomes the object of criticism. Any statement which survives this further ordeal and is still employed to express the judgment of a large body of Christians gains by that very fact historic importance. The keener the criticism and the longer the period of survival, the greater will be the value of the statement.

But before we accept too hastily the simple criterion of long survival as a sufficient ground of acceptance yet another factor must be taken into account. Criticism must be at once fairly intelligent and sufficiently widely diffused before it can be accepted as a completely satisfactory test of the value of a credal statement. On the one hand there may be a considerable identity of the presuppositions in the circle in which the creed finds acceptance that militates against the argument drawn from long-continued acceptance. The fact of long-established belief by men of eminence was confidently urged in favour of the Ptolemaic theory in astronomy.

But, on the other hand, when a new form of belief gains acceptance this very feature of the resisting value of conservatism invites a generous attitude to the new presentation. The acceptance of a new form of expression, embodied in a creed, by those who have been trained in a contrary mode, must be something wholly different from blind acquiescence. If, therefore, we can be satisfied that there has been variety of judgment and that the credal statement won its way in the teeth of resolute opposition and tore down the innate conservatism that at first opposed it, we have very good grounds for regarding it as worthy of acceptance.

Two objections have been urged against reliance upon any formal statements of belief.

It has been said that however excellent these formulations may have been when they were brought into being, and however valuable may be their advance upon existing conservatism, they still labour under an insurmountable defect. They are limited by the fact that they are expressed in the thought-moulds of their time. At first sight the objection appears to be a mere truism. It is impossible to express any idea except in the thought-mould belonging to the time of expression. But the purpose of the objection is to insist that the very fact, so clearly perceived, prevents us from using fixed forms. We are in the strait-jackets of the past. And we are consequently uncomfortable. The

objection seems sound until we realize that it involves the assumption that the thought-moulds of one age are unintelligible to another. If this were true every generation, or at least every epoch, would have to begin all over again. But quite the contrary is the fact. The principles of thought are permanent. Hence the forms employed by one generation or one epoch can be interpreted correctly by another. There is always some slight difficulty that may be illustrated by differences in dialect, but there is an underlying base of agreement.

But there is a more subtle objection to the use of creeds. It is assumed that creeds are simply the expression of religious sentiment. Religious sentiment changes from age to age, and so creeds which have no basic authority other than sentiment must change also. Dr. Machen points out that this modern point of view cuts right across the conception which governed the old creed-makers. He expresses the difference by saying that the difference may be found in the fact that the old creed-makers believed the creeds were true. That is, they were not simply presentations of existing sentiment, they were formal statements of truth which had been revealed. They depended on the Bible for verification.

If we are content to take the attitude of the old creed-makers we can see from this discussion how close is the connection between interpretation and systematic theology rightly conducted. What methods should be adopted to ascertain the teaching of the Bible on any subject?

First of all we should collect data. It is not necessary to tabulate every passage dealing with the subject under consideration. A selection of passages will be sufficient. But in making our selection we should be careful to choose passages which are free from ambiguity. We should also be careful to notice any variant readings of the text that might impair the value of our citation. The selection should include references from all the authors in the Bible who deal with the topic. In this way we get the angle on different ages and different temperaments.

Having collected our data, we should draw our conclusions or inferences which may not be regarded as definite conclusions. The propositions which we develop will be of varying value. Some, in our judgment, will be indisputable deductions. Others will have a measure of probability, in some cases so great as almost to compel acceptance. Others, again, will be merely possible interpretations which do not, even in our judgment, exclude an alternative suggestion.

But when we have arrived at what seems to us definite conclusions we are sometimes confronted with opposing opinions that have a fairly wide measure of acceptance. It then becomes necessary to review our conclusions carefully, in the light of these opposing opinions, and to give our reasons for maintaining the opinions we are led

eventually to adopt. Many factors combine to produce differences of interpretation. It is necessary to be on our guard particularly against two.

There may be an imperfect acquaintance with the facts. This may be due to defective selection of passages. There may also be misinterpretation of the facts which have been tabulated. This is often due to previous training which creates prejudices in favour of a particular interpretation.

In the light of these general rules governing wise exposition, we shall present in this book a few important features of biblical revelation. The area selected for study might be called "The Pilgrim's Progress". The main theme of the book is the workings of God on the redeemed soul.

The new creation in the human personality begins with the divine quickening. This is an act of pure grace wrought by the direct agency of the Holy Spirit. But such divine quickening inevitably leads to reactions of the human soul which are called in Scripture repentance and faith. Such reactions are occasioned by means, and these are presented to us as the Word and sacraments. These are the divine agencies which occasion, on the human side, response in prayer and obedience. At last we are presented with God's completed work: the renewed man, renewed in body as well as in soul.

When the spiritual evidence relating to all these factors in redemption is assembled we speedily discover various trends of thought and various differences in judgment on the part of those who claim to present the scriptural doctrine. It is not possible within the limits which we have imposed on the formation of this book to criticize in detail all the various views that have been advanced. It is hoped, however, that where opposing views are outlined the student will receive enough information to enable him to contrast the alternative opinions and form a sound judgment on the merits of the exposition which is preferred.

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CHAPTER I

BIBLICAL TEACHING ON REGENERATION

When we seek to study the evidence of the Bible concerning the beginning of spiritual experience we come across statements regarding "regeneration" and "new birth". It is advisable to consider carefully the meaning of the word "regeneration". In English the word means "to form over again", "to reconstitute". In Greek the word "palingenesis", which is translated "regeneration", has the same significance. In the New Testament the word is used in two different connections. It occurs twice only. In one passage it deals with the re-formation of all things. Our Lord says in Matthew xix. 28: "In the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory", where "regeneration" refers to the renewal of the whole world. We have thus a parallel to the vision in Revelation: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth" (xxi. 1). In the other passage, Titus iii. 5, 6, the reference is to the reconstitution of individuals: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Obviously the application of the term to the re-formation of the world does not exclude the idea of the reconstitution of individuals. It may be said to imply it. The usage in Titus, however, justifies the use of the word regeneration to describe an experience which has effects in personal consciousness. Still, where we have only one passage of Scripture to guide us in the employment of a term the inferences drawn from it must be precarious. It is not surprising, therefore, to discover that the phrase "the washing of regeneration" has been variously interpreted.

Parallel Phrases

Fortunately we are not restricted to one passage in an attempt to describe the nature of the change wrought in individuals. Although the term "regeneration" is employed only once in this connection, we have a second usage in the New Testament which enables us to construct more fully the New Testament doctrine on this subject. It is from this second usage that we obtain the term "new birth" as descriptive of the moral change wrought in the individual. The Greek noun for birth occurs three times in the New Testament. It is translated "nature" in James iii. 6. It always refers to natural birth. It is otherwise with the verb. The word usually employed for the communication

of natural life through the agency of a father is employed with some qualifying clause showing that the reference is to a communication of new and spiritual life. We read in John i. 12, 13: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God . . . which were born . . . of God." In John iii. 3 we read: "Except a man be born again [or from above] he cannot see the kingdom of God." In 1 Peter i. 23 a particle is attached to the verb signifying something done over again. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

We find in James i. 18 a different word used, which in its general reference in Greek describes a mother in the act of giving birth to a child. It is used twice by James, and by him only, in the New Testament. The first reference (i. 15) is to sin bringing forth death. The second reference (i. 18), to which we have already referred, reads: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." This guards against any undue emphasis on the physical parallel between natural paternity and the spiritual process, to which attention is directed in these passages.

The use of a different verb, even though only once, is sufficient to prevent any hasty assumption that a distinction is emphasized between the communication of life and the subsequent experience of birth in the New Testament employment of the words "begotten" and "born again".

In the First Epistle of John the expression "begotten" occurs seven times—1 John ii. 29, iii. 9, iv. 7, v. 1, 4, 18 (twice). In every instance emphasis is laid on a consequent moral change. For example, we read in 1 John v. 4 (R.V.): "Whatsoever is begotten of God overcometh the world." The assertion is most general in character. It lays down the principle that the begotten of God are victors.

Relevant Terms

In addition to the words "regeneration" and "begetting" there are other relevant terms occurring in the New Testament which demand consideration. Paul speaks of those who were "quickened" or "made alive" in Ephesians ii. 5. The Ephesians had been dead through their trespasses and sins, but God, who is rich in mercy, had quickened them together with Christ. The "quickening" is spoken of as God's direct operation. It is useful to compare Ephesians i. 19, 20, where the strength of God's might is stated to be shown pre-eminently in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. In 2 Corinthians v. 17 Paul uses yet another illustration of God's work. He writes: "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new" (R.V.). He uses the same word in Galatians vi. 15: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

A comparison of the language in Ephesians and Galatians with Romans i. 20 reveals that Paul compares the inner change wrought in the man in Christ to the act of God in calling the world into being. Closely related to the preceding passages is the contrast between "the flesh" and "the spirit" which is given us in John iii. 6: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit", which Paul also employs in Romans viii. 4–8, ending with the conclusion: "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." Peter in a different manner emphasizes the contrast between the old life and the new when he writes that Christians have been begotten "unto a living hope . . . unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" (1 Pet. i. 3, 4, R.V.).

Paul has yet another metaphor. He exhorts the Ephesians that they had been taught in Jesus to "put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit" and to "put on the new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Eph. iv. 22–4, R.V.). Here, in addition to the idea of a new creation, we have a positive action on the part of the individual. The old man is laid on one side. It would perhaps be too much to imagine that Paul had for a moment a recurring vision of the day when the witnesses against Stephen had laid aside their garments at his feet. Luke, when narrating the story, uses the word that Paul employs here. The figure is continued in the exhortation to put on the new man. "Lay aside as an outworn garment the old man and clothe yourself with the new man" certainly gives the sense of this exhortation. Here again, as in John's use of the word "begotten", there is a forceful reminder that the being created after God in righteousness and holiness of truth must inevitably express his new-found activities. The same metaphor is employed by Paul in the Epistle to the Romans: "Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light" (xiii. 12), and the same verbs are placed in contrast.

The Old Testament

The Old Testament is not as explicit as the New. Yet there are many passages that suggest a similar idea of the relation of God to the soul. The general reference in the Old Testament emphasizes the necessity for righteous conduct. But there are many passages which teach that this righteous conduct is the result of a direct operation of God.

The prophets, as might be expected, give this teaching most clearly. Hosea promises the erring people that God will heal their backslidings and love them freely (xiv. 4). Moses reminds the children of Israel that God had chosen them from among all nations. He draws attention to God's provident care of them in their journeyings through the wilderness (see, for example, Deut. iv. 32–8, xxix. 5).

There is a remarkable passage in Genesis: "For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; to the end that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (xviii. 19, R.V.). There is a similar idea in Amos: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities" (iii. 2, R.V.). In both passages God's knowledge is related to God's purpose. The thought is not "I know that such a thing will happen" but "Because I have turned my attention to him such things must happen". The very word for punish used here and rendered "visit upon" in the Revised Version has the same idea of devoting attention to the person concerned even if it be for just vengeance.

The Book of the Psalms is rich with the consciousness of God's dealings. It may be sufficient to quote Psalm li. 10—"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me"—as typical of many appeals contained in this treasury of devotional experience.

In the prophet Ezekiel we come close to the New Testament ideal, and the same may be said of his contemporary, Jeremiah. It is in Jeremiah that God promises to put His law in the people's inward parts and write it upon their hearts (xxxi. 33). But in Ezekiel there is a conception of regeneration intermediate between the idea of regeneration in Matthew and the idea of the restoration of the individual. Ezekiel is looking for a national renovation of the people of Israel. He exhorts his hearers in the words of God: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you . . . and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them" (xxxvi. 25–7). But this message is followed immediately by the vision of the valley of dry bones and the promise, "I will . . . cause you to come up out of your graves" (xxxvii. 12), which indicates that a national as well as an individual moral restoration is in mind. So the message of the Old Testament is consistent with that of the New. In the New Testament more emphasis is laid on individual responsibility, although this factor is not ignored in the Old.

Regeneration Unique

When we examine the scriptural evidence we find that regeneration is a unique experience. Notice the metaphors employed: a "birth" or a "begetting"; a "creation"; a "translation into the kingdom of God's dear Son"; a "putting off of the old man". As applied to the individual, these terms certainly indicate an experience that is not repeated. This New Testament usage has impressed quite a number of people who

hold very different views as to the significance of the change thus indicated. As an illustration of this we may briefly summarize two such opinions.

The Theory of Waterland. Daniel Waterland, a distinguished Anglican divine of the eighteenth century, whose works well repay careful study, has propounded a theory that has won wide acceptance. He distinguishes between regeneration and renovation. Regeneration is regarded by him as indicating a change of state. The individual is brought into a new and favourable relation to God. Renovation, on the other hand, indicates a change of character. Regeneration and renovation may be coincident, but it is not safe to assume that coincidence is inevitable. He argues that in baptism our state is changed. We are admitted into the family of God. But it does not follow of necessity that our character is changed. Every baptized person is regenerated, but it cannot be held that every baptized person is, therefore, renovated. This may be said to be the old-fashioned High Church view. Those who held it were at one with Evangelicals in looking for conversion. They also held that a change of state did not justify the sinner. Justification before God could only be secured, in the case of those who had attained to the use of reason, by a direct act of faith.

The Roman Catholic Theory. The Church of Rome is also sensible of the uniqueness of regeneration. She teaches that baptism is the instrument of regeneration, so that where baptism is duly ministered, provided that no obstacle is opposed, the three evangelical virtues, faith, hope and charity, are infused into the soul. The Roman Church holds that a loss of faith—that is, in her terminology, failure to accept the dogmas imposed by the Church—issues in apostasy; the loss of hope—that is, failure to apprehend the goodness and mercy of God—issues in despair; and, even when faith and hope still persist, the loss of charity—that is, failure to exercise the true spirit of love, between God and man, or between man and man—issues in a condition of spiritual death in the soul, notwithstanding the experience of regeneration. The differences between these two views are, of course, very serious. At the same time it is remarkable that the pressure of scriptural evidence has produced such a wide consensus of opinion as to the uniqueness of regeneration.

Regeneration and Renovation

A study of the passages of Scripture already tabled points to the conclusion, which Professor Mozley insists upon, that "regeneration is a state of actual goodness" (see *Review of the Baptismal Controversy*). Mozley definitely joins issue with Waterland and contends that regeneration, in the New Testament sense of the word, involves spiritual renovation (see particularly 2 Cor. v. 17; John iii. 4; Eph. ii. 1, 10).

Strange to say the Evangelical and the Roman Catholic unite against the view of Waterland in this particular.

Two Different Usages of the Word Regeneration

It must be further noted in this preliminary study that the word regeneration, even when restricted to the experience of the individual, is used in two different senses.

(*a*) Sometimes it is regarded as a term coincident with salvation. In this usage it is employed as a general name for the entire process commencing in the individual with repentance and ending with the final redemption of the body. Those who employ the term in this wide significance are prepared to admit that there is always an expressed or implied reference to the complete work which regeneration envisages. They would say, for example, that the words "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" implies a spiritual process commencing with quickening and ending with complete freedom from all sin. That is the true new birth—a begetting which carries in it the promise and guarantee of the consequent life.

Many maintain that the words in the Church of England Baptismal Office, "This child is regenerate", must be interpreted in the light of this wider significance of the term. They direct attention to the exhortation: "Doubt ye not therefore, but earnestly believe, that He will likewise favourably receive this present infant; that He will embrace him with the arms of His mercy; that He will give unto him the blessing of eternal life and make him partaker of His everlasting kingdom." They say it is not right to narrow the term "regenerate" and bring it within closer limits than those indicated in the exhortation itself.

(*b*) However, an increasing number of Bible students, while not denying this wider usage to be permissible, and even demanded, by some passages of Scripture, prefer to take regeneration usually in a narrower sense, as the implanting of divine life, a life developed by the continuous operation of the Holy Spirit. On this view the stages of Christian experience might be formulated as regeneration, justification, sanctification and glorification; this is the more usual modern view of the theological term. It must, however, be emphasized that the narrower and more usual modern use must not be taken as excluding all reference to the wider, more comprehensive, employment of the term. Much harm results from failure to recognize the fact that many theological expressions are capable of a restricted and a wider usage. In the light of Matthew xix. 28 it is not possible to exclude from consideration a view of regeneration which contemplates it as a general term expressive of the whole of the process by which a renewed universe comes into existence. Hence the complete renewal of the individual so as to adapt him for existence in this renewed universe is included in the term.

If we are careful in our definition and adopt as a point of departure the narrower view of the term regeneration, two problems present themselves. In the first place we have to ask: What is the relation of regeneration to justification and sanctification? In the second place: What is the order of experience in regeneration? For example, does repentance precede faith?

Regeneration and Justification

There are several different opinions as to the relation between regeneration and justification.

(*a*) *The Roman Catholic View.* This has already been briefly outlined. The Roman Church teaches that regeneration and justification are two aspects of the same thing. In regeneration the nature of the individual is changed. As a consequence of this change the individual becomes just in the sight of God. Where the three evangelical virtues, faith, hope and charity, are added to the four cardinal virtues, truth, temperance, courage and justice, and are functioning, the individual is in a state of justice. A state of justice is the term employed where Protestants would use a different phraseology and speak either of being accounted righteous or of being actually righteous. The sincerely repentant adult, on this theory, who has been baptized, is accounted righteous before God because he possesses the required virtues. If he should die without committing mortal sin he would go straight to heaven. According to this view, to justify is to make just.

(*b*) *The Laudian View.* According to the older High Church teaching, associated with the name of Laud, a change of character is effected by baptism. This takes place inevitably unless a bar is imposed by the recipient of the sacrament. But this change of character is, at the beginning, potential rather than actual, and depends for its development upon the conscious act of the individual. It is an inherent disposition which is not perfect and, therefore, cannot secure justification. The old-fashioned High Churchman accepts Hooker's dictum: "The righteousness which justifies is perfect but not inherent; the righteousness which sanctifies is inherent but not perfect" (*Serm.* II, sec. 3). Hence, advocates of this opinion looked for conversion and taught justification by faith only.

(*c*) *The Evangelical View.* Regeneration, again in the narrower use of the term, is regarded by evangelicals as the direct operation of the Holy Spirit rather than a consequence of baptism or a fruit directly produced by baptism. In the language of the Church of England Prayer Book, it is "putting into our minds good desires". It emerges in consciousness, but, in the judgment of many writers, is an initial movement below the level of consciousness. This latter particular opinion has been exposed to severe criticism at different times. Recently it has won wider acceptance because of researches in psychology.

Psychology and the Evangelical View. The question which the psychologist propounds, "Is the conscious life the full life?" has important bearings on the problem under review. Professor James of Harvard answers the question with an emphatic negative. Freud has greatly extended James' theory. As a result it is now commonly believed that there are two strata below consciousness: the subconscious and the unconscious. The subconscious is that wide area of habits, impulses and tendencies, of which we have a confused apprehension. When, for example, a certain opinion is presented to us there is an immediate reaction: an awakening either of interest or of satisfaction or of revolt. We are conscious of the emotion, but as yet it is not clearly defined. We discover, on reflection, that our attitude is conditioned by long trains of previous experience. We pass judgment on the opinion. But although our judgment is a judgment given in full consciousness, it is partly conditioned by a mass of tendencies, not fully apprehended, yet strongly operative in directing us to our conscious decision. Underneath these vague impressions, and, to some extent, conditioning them, is a wide area of established habit which has ceased to be conscious. How far this extends no one can tell, but that it is there is sometimes discovered to us by careful analysis. James, in his *Varieties of Religious Experience,* says: "If grace operates it probably does so through these subconscious or unconscious channels." James probably regarded theological discussions as beyond the range of his enquiry. Otherwise he might have pointed out that he was expressing a view which had been arrived at by a wholly independent line of investigation by theologians of his own country. This feature will emerge later.

The Strictly Theological Problem

Closely related to the psychological question which has awakened such great interest in our day is the theological question: which is first in salvation—God's work or man's work? The question attained great prominence in the fifth century. Pelagianism arose then. Pelagius denied that man needs a change of heart in order to live a Christian life. He was willing to concede that a man needed divine grace, but he could seek that grace by the exercise of his own free will. Augustine revolted against Pelagianism. The teaching that goes by that name was condemned at the Council of Orange. As frequently happens when matters are the subject of long discussion, a mediating school arose. According to the followers of this school, man's will was greatly debilitated by his fall. Still, he was left with power to dispose himself towards attainment of divine grace. His initial disposition, together with the divine assistance which was always rendered to the truly penitent, resulted in salvation.

Nearly all the Reformers were Augustinians. The tenth article of

the Church of England, which declares, "We have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will", is an almost direct quotation from Augustine's treatise concerning grace and the freedom of the will. Further, the views of Augustine find expression to a large extent in the writings of Thomas Aquinas. On the other hand, the Jesuits modified the Augustinian theory. This is asserted by Cardinal Newman in his letter to the Duke of Norfolk. The Jesuits were opposed by the Jansenists in France, and ultimately Jansenism was condemned. It would appear, therefore, that we are justified in saying that the modern Church of Rome follows Jesuit teaching in these particulars. Incidentally, the Jansenist controversy produced Pascal's *Provincial Letters,* in which he treats with irony the Jesuit doctrines of probabilism, equivocation and mental reservation.

The Attitude of the Council of Trent

Calvin and many of the English Reformers maintained that the Council of Trent, under influences similar to those which determine Jesuit doctrine, drifted into semi-Pelagianism, the name given to the mediating school to which we have briefly referred. Roman Catholic divines deny this. It is certain, however, that the Roman Church teaches that man can dispose himself towards the divine favour. Those who contend that this is not semi-Pelagianism justify their opinion by asserting that such a movement of the will is the result of divine revelation mediated through the Word of God and the Church (the authorized exponent of the divine will). Thus, on the Roman view, what is called by Calvinists "common grace"—that is, the revelation of the divine purpose in nature and in the sacred Scriptures—is sufficient in itself to awaken a feeble movement of the will towards God. Pure Augustinianism, on the contrary, holds that by nature man is insensible to divine grace. The movement of the soul towards God, when it takes place, is not traceable to a disposition of the individual, operating on the data afforded either by nature or by revelation, but a quickening of the soul by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit rendering the man sensible of the value of spiritual things. Augustine expressed this in the famous sentence: "Draw us and we will run after Thee."

The Relation of the Problem to Scripture

The prolonged discussions between Augustinians, Pelagians and semi-Pelagians revealed a difference of judgment as to the correct answer to the question which is first in salvation—God's work or man's work? The Augustinians make "quickening" the first movement. Their opponents make the human disposition, directing itself to spiritual

truth, the first movement. On the face of it, apart from its verbal resemblance to passages in Augustine's treatise, the tenth article of the Church of England, quoted above, is Augustinian. What is more important, it has strong scriptural support. The message given to Paul was: "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light" (Acts xxvi. 18). The latter part of the text might be consonant with the Pelagian, or at least the semi-Pelagian, theory. Conceivably a man might be induced by natural means to turn in a certain direction. But recovery from blindness requires an act of God. The gospel appears as a stumbling-block to Jews and Greeks, but to the "called" Christ is the wisdom of God and the power of God. There is more than one such reference to "calling" in Paul's epistles, and the account he gives of his own conversion in the Epistle to the Galatians supports the Augustinian view. He mentions three stages in the work of grace. It pleased God to separate him from his mother's womb; to call him by His grace; to reveal His Son in him.

The first movement in regeneration is a movement of God upon the hitherto irresponsive soul. As James might have pointed out, were he versed in the theology of his country, the seventeenth-century Puritan divines spoke of it as a "physical" work. They meant by that phrase that it was a work on the φύσις or "nature" of the individual.

Repentance and Faith

Closely associated with the first movement of grace, which is below consciousness, is the problem which arises when the new experience emerges into consciousness. What is the relation between repentance and faith? Which comes first? Is repentance an exercise of faith or is faith conditioned by repentance? While in practice the two are indissoluble, it seems best to assert that in the order of thought there must be an element of faith, as a precedent condition in every act of repentance.

When John is commenting on the obdurately disobedient he writes: "Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them" (John xii. 39, 40. Cf. Luke i. 17; Acts iii. 19, ix. 35, xiv. 15, xv. 19, xxvi. 20; 1 Thess. i. 9). Our Lord not only quotes the same passage from Isaiah (Matt. xiii. 15) but tells us that the Holy Spirit convicts men of sin "because they believe not on me" (John xvi. 9). The unrepentant attitude is the attitude of unbelief. On another occasion He tells us that if the mighty works done in Chorazin had been done in Tyre and Sidon they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes (Matt. xi. 21).

In all these passages faith and repentance are closely conjoined. They are best interpreted as implying that faith awakened repentance.

On the other hand, faith is spoken of, apparently, as succeeding repentance. We have such passages as "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xx. 21) and "repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark i. 15).

But these passages are not absolutely determinant as to the order of repentance and faith. Faith has, as it were, two aspects. It is directed towards the sentence of God's judgment against sin. When the word regarding wrath is accepted and firmly believed repentance is awakened. But faith is also directed to the mercy of God revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. In this aspect it becomes faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. It leads us to believe the gospel. The circumstance towards which faith is directed is sufficient to explain the different usages of the term.

Degrees of Repentance

Close attention must be paid to the meaning of the terms employed in Scripture to indicate the English words "repentance" and "faith".

Two words are employed in the Old Testament for repentance. One of them means "to pant", "to sigh", "to groan", and expresses the emotional revolt occasioned by a sense of wrongdoing. The other word signifies "to turn" or "to return" and comes near to the New Testament presentation. In the New Testament repentance means literally "a change of mind". The verb "to turn" or "to return" is also employed to bring out the fact that a change of action issues from this change of mind. "Faith" has the double sense of "trustworthiness" and "an act of trust or reliance". In a few passages it means the base on which this act of reliance rests; for example, James ii. 14–20 and Jude 3. We are now considering "repentance".

Because of the poverty of language and the perversity of human nature the expression "change of mind" has been degraded in popular use to the level of a mere passing caprice. A man is said to change his mind when he accepts a second helping from a favourite dish, having previously declined it. Biblical repentance is often spoken of as if it meant no more than that and was as easy as that. We have to recognize that "change of mind" may, and frequently does, cover much more than yielding to the whim or inclination of the moment. Such changes of mind alter the current of life very slightly, so slightly indeed as sometimes to render the alteration just barely perceptible in consciousness. But there are deeper changes of mind which cannot be effected without long and anxious consideration and which involve very many serious consequences.

An illustration of an important change of mind is furnished by the act of a Member of Parliament who crosses from one side of the

House to the other. When under pressure of fresh evidence a man gives up a cherished opinion in favour of a view he had previously rejected the change goes very deep.

He has to break many old ties and frame many new ones. He has to meet with contempt from his old associates and, possibly, with some measure of suspicion from his new. His most serious problem, however, is the readjustment of his old habits of life and thought in the light of his new determination. At every stage in his new career he is faced with old commitments and old habits that assert themselves. If he is to preserve unity in his mental and moral being he is forced to prompt and resolute reorganization of thought and action. It is easy to see that the greater the revolution which such reorganization involves the deeper becomes the problem of repentance.

The Scriptural Presentation

In the light of these observed facts we need to recall that the Scripture, when speaking of repentance, indicates a change of mind that penetrates to the very roots of the individual's life.

The prophet Ezekiel writes: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh" (xxxvi. 26). As we have already seen, the New Testament speaks of the change of which repentance is the conscious expression, as a "new birth" and as "a new creation".

But, as we have also seen, the deeper we go into the strata of consciousness, the more difficult does repentance become. But here is an operation that penetrates every layer of consciousness until it reaches the primal centre of our being. The change effected there returns in its reciprocal effects in layer after layer in our subconscious and conscious being, demanding and securing readjustment in each.

The bias of our nature is first changed by the power of God. As a consequence, the vague apprehensions, due to long habit, take on a new direction as the soul seeks to establish itself in its new relation to God. Finally, in the full conscious life, a harmony with the mind of Christ is achieved. Sin becomes loathsome, and God becomes the great Reality. Alexander McLaren, commenting on the text "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" points out, quite truly, that man has very considerable powers of self-improvement or reformation. But he also points out that for men in general, custom, inclination, indolence and the lack of adequate motive weigh so heavily that a thorough abandonment of evil, much less a hearty practice of good, are not to be looked for in the natural man when once character has been formed (*Expositions of Scriptures* on text cited). Matthew Henry, who can generally be trusted to clinch an argument with a telling phrase, writes: "Custom in sin is a very great hindrance to

conversion from sin." Those who are taught to do evil do not readily change to good.

To minimize the radical nature of spiritual repentance is to misread the full message of the gospel. The more deep-seated the revolution in thought, the wider its effects in changes of determination.

Nor should we assume that repentance is completed in one single act of the soul. Repentance is a new attitude consequent upon this radical change of nature. As a result, the widest possible area of activity comes under review, so that the largest possible number of single determinations demand alteration if the new harmony is to be maintained.

Repentance is a Conscious Act and Issues in Conscious Acts

Repentance is always a conscious activity. Hence its description as "a change of mind". In the Old Testament the prophet exhorts the people of Israel in the words: "make you a new heart and a new spirit" (Ezek. xviii. 31. Cf. xxxvi. 26 for the divine side of the operation). In the New Testament Paul declares: "God . . . commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts xvii. 30), and insistence is laid on the fact that "repentance and remission of sins is preached" (Luke xxiv. 47; Acts xiii. 38).

A feature in ordinary experience may help us to understand the effect of the divine message once the soul is awakened to its significance. Reform in ordinary life is occasioned by the awakening of some impulse which redirects the activity of the mind. What we may call a war of motives is being constantly waged. Some circumstances, some message, some memory, throws the weight of the personality on the side of one motive and a determination in form of one course of action follows. A man is drinking with his companions. He sees in imagination the face of his wife, mournful and pleading. He places his glass on the counter and goes home. The memory of a girl's unfaltering trust kills the sense of appetite for the time being. But memory had to be awakened. It could not be awakened if it were not there. But it might have been left to slumber. The stronger the habit, the more difficult to arouse a contrary impulse and secure thereby a decision different from the one first contemplated. But if we assume a power that quickens into life dead impulses or implants entirely new impulses, then we can understand how the quickened or new impulses, or both, make the requisite appeal and secure the desired result.

The difficulty the preacher faces is expressed vigorously by Dr. Guthrie: "He has to prepare sermons for dead men and preach them to dry bones." We must also remember that the prophet was instructed to "Prophesy upon these bones" (Ezek. xxxvii. 4). Later he is commanded to prophesy: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live" (verse 9). There was no life until the breath of God came, but yet the message was used, as was

the breath, to quicken into life. It is tempting to follow the analogy and to suggest that one effect of scriptural teaching is to secure integration and prepare for the divine inspiration; but it may not be wise or profitable to follow a parable further than the prophet carries us.

The Meaning of Faith

As we have seen, the New Testament meaning of the word "faith" is "reliance", Bishop Handley Moule writes: "The contact of faith is perfectly simple in itself; it is no less and no more than the personal confidence of the awakened soul on the ground of divine truth and promise" (*Outlines of Christian Doctrine*, p. 132). Here, also, as in the case of repentance, we can trace the operations of faith in different strata of consciousness. It is because of failure to observe this manifest fact that faith has been degraded into a mere acceptance of certain propositions. It is then assumed that "mere faith" can exercise no influence, or at most exercises very little influence, on the life of the individual. To combat erroneous opinions of this kind, the older theologians frequently describe faith as containing in it three elements: knowledge, assent, trust. Dr. Griffith Thomas puts that position clearly in a slightly different form. He writes: "Faith in man answers to grace in God. As such, it affects the whole of man's nature. It commences with the conviction of the mind based on adequate evidence; it continues in the confidence of the heart or emotions based on the above conviction, and it is completed in the consent of the will, by means of which the conviction and confidence are expressed in conduct" (*Principles of Theology*, p. 20). This is a usual and profitable manner of treating the subject.

Degrees of Faith

If, however, we follow the line of inquiry, opened up by this closer definition of the nature of faith, we shall find in the character of faith something analogous to that which we previously found in the nature of repentance. The lowest form of faith, using the term in its widest and most popular sense, is that which overcomes ignorance or prejudice. A person who is ignorant may be induced by evidence to include certain facts in his experience. He may learn that the earth goes round the sun, or that the angles at the base of an isosceles triangle are equal. He thereby increases his knowledge and, apparently, there the matter ends. He is like a man living in a tropical climate, who learns that water freezes below 32 degrees Fahrenheit. He now knows it, but he neither wishes nor expects to see frozen water. There are examples of the simple acceptance of testimony where there exists no contrary emotions or conviction; but a further step is taken when the individual overcomes prejudice. He is disinclined to accept a certain fact, but the overweight of evidence breaks down his stubborn

resistance. Where prejudice is thus overcome, a wider area of activity is immediately opened. As in the parallel case of repentance, a number of readjustments will be demanded. In fact, it is true to say a conviction that overcomes prejudice is a form of repentance.

Different Reactions Occasioned by Faith at This Stage of Development

Simple intellectual conviction, which has been brought about by the compelling power of evidence, may produce very remarkable reactions. These may be wholly different in different cases. James tells us: "The devils also believe, and tremble" (ii. 19). But before James instances this case of malignant reaction he is careful to commend the act of assent in itself. The reaction was not wholly profitable, but the assent in itself was not only necessary but commendable. "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well." Neither ignorance nor prejudice is praiseworthy. It is good to get rid of both.

But the devils, who were not ignorant and who were not sufficiently prejudiced to exclude from their thought recognition of the existence of God, were hostile to the claims of the God they could not exclude from their knowledge. They felt compelled to assent to God's existence. So far they did well. But they refused to give assent to His sovereignty, and in this they invited judgment. The evidence was so clear that they trembled. Abraham is placed in striking contrast. He acknowledged God's sovereign claim even to the extent of offering his son Isaac on the altar. By that work of his his faith reached completion. Sufficient attention has not been paid to St. James' mode of expression. "Faith," says St. James, "wrought with his works" (ii. 22). The careless reader may be tempted to imagine that what St. James wrote was "works wrought with his faith". Unfortunately, the careless reader can buttress his false inference by the authority of many interpreters. We often neglect to study Scripture carefully. The added comment "by works was faith made perfect" is sufficient to advise us that James has in view the development and completion of faith. As Dr. Salmon wittily expresses it: "Whether St. James intended to correct Paul or no, it is certain that he did not do so." The burden of the message is that a real faith, fully matured, includes more than the acquisition of knowledge; includes more than an assent to the fact against the pressure of prejudice; faith reaches completion when it issues in action.

Because Abraham fully believed, he was ready even to offer up his son Isaac. Because Rahab accepted the testimony, to which the drying up of the Red Sea gave sensible evidence, she hid the two spies.

But we are warned that there may be other reactions. Instead of faith having its perfect work, a contrary emotion may be evoked. Facts may occasion resentment. The king of Israel said of Micaiah:

"I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil" (1 Kings xxii. 8). There may be a measure of aquiescence in the fact, together with resentment against that which the fact demands or foreshadows.

The discussion on repentance made it quite clear that there can be a degree of improvement in the moral nature, even when true repentance, reaching upwards from the primal fount of all inner being, is lacking. Similarly, our study here leads to the conclusion that there can be a measure of faith which, nevertheless, fails to issue in a final determinate act of reliance on God. Herod heard John the Baptist and did many things because of him. He believed that John was a true prophet. But the inner core of Herod's being was not touched. In the end, the fact of his unlawful desire collided with the fact of John's prophetic character. Herod, notwithstanding misgivings which never left him, allowed his unlawful desire to determine his actions.

The close relation between faith and repentance is manifest in the phenomenon of superficial repentance and superficial faith. Both are true up to a point. Both fail in the crucial test. Faith, which lacks "the honest and good heart", may give evidence of its existence in the springing up of the seed (Luke viii. 13). But it fails to give that evidence of completion required by James. It does not continue to operate until fruit is produced. There is either lack of depth or failure to uproot evil tendencies. The seed germinates to perfection only in the prepared soil (Luke viii. 14, 15). It is plain from the parable of the sower that men can believe, up to a point, without renewal, just as they can repent, up to a point, without renewal. The New Testament is freer in its language than many theologians. We can become so precise as to depart from reality. St. Luke records, for example, that Simon the Sorcerer believed and was baptized (Acts viii. 13). Yet Peter can say to the same man: "thy heart is not right in the sight of God" (verse 21). Simon, evidently, was convinced up to a point. But he had not reached that stage of faith which issues in complete personal reliance. It could not be said of him: "faith wrought with his works". One further point needs to be emphasized. Faith itself is an inherent capacity belonging to man's nature as a rational being. Hence in the New Testament we are not enjoined to exercise faith but to exercise "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ". The object of faith is of very great importance. This fact is frequently overlooked.

If, however, faith and repentance are so closely enjoined, and if the evidence points to the fact that repentance is never awakened unless there is an acceptance of testimony, which is itself an act of faith, why do we find passages which demand "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xx. 21)? Why is this order uniform? We do not read of "faith toward God and repentance toward our Lord Jesus Christ". The best answer seems to be that faith

is spoken of in such passages as the final act of reliance on Jesus Christ as our Saviour and God. The words have the same significance that attach to them in the Catechism of the Church of England: "Repentance, whereby they forsake sin, and faith, whereby they stedfastly believe the promises of God, made to them in this sacrament." Every change of mind is effected by the admission of a fresh concept. In every genuine spiritual revolution the admission of this fresh concept is secured by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the first move towards regeneration, and this first move, when it finds expression in consciousness, is called repentance.

Two Sides to Faith

Faith, however, has two sides. It is the acceptance of God's testimony which occasions us to turn away from evil.

This aspect is very powerfully represented in the Old Testament: "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die"; "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts"; "When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive". But faith is not completed, although it is present, in this act of aversion. Faith is also and inevitably an act of reliance. "Look unto me, and be ye saved"; "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved"; "He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life". This aspect of faith is more closely associated with the Person of Christ. He is our answer, and our only answer, to God's judgment.

Regeneration begins with a movement of God, awakening faith in His testimony, or creating a capacity for such faith. When it is developed, as it must be in consciousness, it issues in two movements of the soul. There is created an aversion to sin and a spirit of reliance on our Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. Because the latter is the perfection of faith, it is given greater prominence in the Scripture.

CHAPTER II

REGENERATION, FAITH AND BAPTISM

Regeneration and Justification

When we ask what is the precise relation between regeneration and justification, many interesting questions arise. There are, at least, three views, all of which can command the authority of important names. Many would claim that we are regenerate first and justified afterwards. This opinion can be advanced in the interests of several different forms of presentation of the divine purpose. All that some would mean is that the "quickening" of the soul comes first and this is succeeded by an act of faith which secures justification. Regeneration, in the narrower sense of the word already indicated, must be the beginning of Christian experience. But Bishop Overall is credited with an extension of this idea which has far-reaching consequences. If the interpretation of his statements, which we are considering, are correct, he not only held that we are regenerate first and justified after; he held, in addition, that the gift of perseverance, resulting in eternal security, was given to the elect, but not to all the regenerate. Justification by faith did not always and inevitably succeed to regeneration in the experience of the soul.

This interpretation, widely credited to Overall, has been adopted by many who do not share Overall's doctrine of the final security of believers. It lies behind the popular statement, based on Waterland, that all who are regenerated are not of necessity renovated. The first of these opinions, that regeneration is succeeded by an act of faith, is reconcilable with Mozley's view that "regeneration is a state of actual goodness". The view attributed to Overall may also be reconciled with Mozley. It may be contended that regeneration is a state of goodness which need not be permanent. The opinion that regeneration does not involve renovation in any sense cannot be reconciled with Mozley's opinion.

Regeneration can be presented as a divine act which reaches its culmination, not in justification, though that is an essential element in the process, but in final holiness. But, in the order of thought, there is first an initial stage, the work of God in the heart; this is followed by a response in repentance, the negative side of faith; this again is succeeded by an act of reliance, the positive side of faith. So the subjective work of regeneration secures, through the individual's act of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the objective blessing of justification. But justification is an act of God and not, in itself, a part of regeneration. Indeed, justification may be delayed in consciousness because

of the incapacity of the individual. This does not impair the complementary truth that, in the sight of God, every believer is justified in His eternal purpose; the conscious experience of justification in time follows upon that eternal purpose. It is possible to hold that an infant may be regenerated. To deny it would be to consign all children dying in infancy to eternal damnation. Our Lord's comment concerning infants—"of such is the kingdom of God"—precludes such a harsh judgment. But we must hold that, once the capacity for faith awakens, the regenerated infant revolts from sin and relies on our Lord Jesus Christ. The first dawn of consciousness coincides with the first act of faith. But a contrary view has been maintained and seems to be increasing in popularity. According to some, regeneration does not take place until the sinner is justified. It is a consequence of his act of faith in Jesus Christ our Lord and not in any sense a cause of it. There is much in popular preaching that seems to point in that direction. The act of the individual is made the prime condition of regeneration. "I believed, and therefore I was born again" is a phrase all too commonly heard. Unless great care is exercised here, very dangerous and false judgments may be given. We need to distinguish carefully between those who asserted that regeneration reached its fruition in a life of faith and holiness, as expressed above, and those who have been betrayed into the declaration that our faith creates our regeneration. All that the older divines meant by asserting that regeneration did not take place until the sinner was justified was that the regenerating act of God found its fruition in the appropriating act of faith by which the sinner is justified. They were far from suggesting, especially the Puritan divines, that faith was the cause of regeneration. But the strange turn that has been given to the language they employed is one other illustration of the need for precision. While it is quite true that we can become so precise as to be unreal, we can also become unreal through failing to be precise.

Often insufficient care is taken over the use of terms and also over principles of exegesis. An illustration in relation to the subject before us is found in the powerful similes used by St. Paul. He does not hesitate to say: "I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. iv. 19). Again, in writing to the Corinthians, he says: "I have begotten you through the gospel" (1 Cor. iv. 15). This imagery is easily understood if we bear in mind that throughout the Old and New Testaments the instrument is credited with the power that strictly belongs to the agent. This is, indeed, a commonplace of ordinary speech. We say the hammer drives the nail; the window lights the room; the wheel turns the car. But the incautious speech to which we have referred goes beyond imagery and turns it into literal fact. The metaphor is carried beyond the point of the relation of the instrument to the agent. It is pressed to describe the further position of the

interaction between two agents, God and man. That the regenerative act of God finds fruition in the appropriating act of faith whereby the sinner is justified is developed in the First Epistle of St. John. Indeed, we are carried beyond the act of reliance for salvation into the further experience of obedience to the divine will. Both are described as necessary consequences of God's begetting. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and everyone that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him" (1 John v. 1). A careful study of St. John's epistle reveals, however, that in no place is it asserted that either faith or obedience occasions the new birth, nor do both of them combined. The burden of the message is that faith and obedience bear evidence to the fact that a man is born of God. Apart from such faith and obedience, no evidence is forthcoming. If a child moves, we know that it is alive, but its movement does not make it live. Even so, faith and obedience are never regarded as causing the begetting of which the apostle speaks.

Much popular preaching is against this interpretation. We ought not to make men offenders for a word, but we ought, at times, to examine closely the words they use. Our object should not be to refine away their teaching, still less to convict them of false teaching. Rather, we should seek to build upon the truth revealed, and endeavour to go deeper than the popular message is able to carry us.

Alexander McLaren, a very gifted expositor, comments upon St. John's message as follows: "We find, according to John's fashion, a three-fold statement in this context (1 John v. 4, 5), upon this matter, each member of which corresponds to and heightens the preceding. We read thus: 'Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world'; 'This is the victory that overcometh the world', or more accurately, *hath overcome* the world, 'even our faith' [McLaren here turns an aorist into a perfect. Westcott renders more accurately 'the victory which overcame the world' and adds 'Thus the aorist . . . receives its full force']; 'Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God'? Wherein there are, speaking roughly, these three statements, that the true victory over the world is won by a new life, born of and kindred with God; that that life is kindled in men's souls through their faith; that the faith which kindles that supernatural life, the victorious antagonist of the world, is the definite, specific faith in Jesus as the Son of God. These are the three points which the apostle puts as the means of the conquest of the world" (*Expositions of Scripture*, loc. cit.). There is much helpful and practical advice given in McLaren's further development of his theme, but for our purpose we concentrate attention on the words: "That that life is kindled in men's souls through their faith." Less cautious and less instructed Christians have interpreted these words to mean: "By my faith I have enkindled the life of God in my soul."

A More Exact Exegesis

McLaren was preaching, not writing a theological treatise, but here his method fails in exegetical accuracy. What St. John really said is: "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: the victory that overcometh the world is our faith." (We may be relieved from a minute discussion on the exact significance of the aorist tense here, as it does not seem to affect very materially the point at issue. Perhaps Westcott's interpretation may be accepted. "Our faith is not merely victorious; it is the embodiment of *the victory which overcame the world*" (*The Epistles of John,* loc. cit.).) Hence the point of the argument in the epistle is not that faith enkindles the new life in the soul but a quite different point, that the possessor of the new life conquers the world because he believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. It is not too much to say that John is here expounding the truth stated in the reported interview between our Lord and Nicodemus: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Faith which overcomes the world is convincing evidence that the faithful one is in God and subject to the renewing power of God. Expressions are piled up, which lead to this conclusion: "Now are we the sons of God"; "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God"; "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God". Notice the careful language in v. 10: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." When compared with the statement in v. 12, "He that hath the Son hath life", the conclusion cannot be avoided that John is insisting, as Westcott puts it, that "the witness, which has been shown to be divine and internal, points also to the presence of a divine life, which, given once for all, is enjoyed by fellowship with the Son (loc. cit.). There is nothing, therefore, in the epistle to contradict the view that the soul is quickened by God, and forthwith shows its new power in believing; on the contrary, there is much to support it.

Analogies are always dangerous because of the tendency to press them too far. Yet as the analogy of the seed is so frequently used in the New Testament, we may be permitted to suggest that the analogy between faith and the prevenient work of God may be likened to a first movement in which the soil is suitably prepared and a second movement in which the seed sown germinates. We are warned indeed by our Lord Himself that, where the first movement is inadequate, there may be germination without the full result. An impression may be made on the heart and soul by the message of the gospel which, nevertheless, falls short of full regeneration. Just because the process is at once natural and supernatural, there may be a real response, which endures for a while, but which, while it resembles closely the true response created by the living spirit, is found at last to be

destitute of that true preparedness of heart which alone secures final life and victory.

Dr. Moule's presentation seems to accord fully with the scriptural evidence. He writes: "Thus, naturally at once and supernaturally, the blessed Spirit 'gives faith' in Jesus. Naturally, by providing that the facts about Him, and His work, and His love shall come in some genuine measure, before the mental eyes. Supernaturally, by bringing the soul, fallen from that original righteousness in which it was in sympathy and harmony with God, back into sympathy with the blessed facts. And this He does in part through His work of conviction of sin, and in part through shedding upon 'the truth as it is in Jesus' in ways wholly of His own, a light of glory and beauty, or, however, of *reality,* which 'eye hath not seen' but which God revealeth 'by His Spirit'. And so the soul sees, and the man believes and comes, entrusting himself to the divinely manifested Christ, and believing hath life through His Name" (*Veni Creator,* p. 112).

Is Faith the Gift of God?

Dr. Moule casts his vote decidedly in favour of those who contend that faith is a definite product of the divine Spirit. He writes: "My readers well know that it has been a grave question whether the Spirit, whether God, does 'give' faith: whether, rather, faith is not just that which we have to contribute of *our own store* to the work of conversion. I am indeed aware of the mysteries which connect themselves with that question. But I am quite sure that Scripture does nevertheless teach us that a living and saving faith is as truly a gift of God as is, for instance, 'repentance'. I find this stated in Ephesians ii. 8, a passage where, if the context is attended to, the stress of the argument is all in favour of explaining the words 'and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God' to mean that the matter just before mentioned, namely the presence of faith in the saved, is the gift of God. I read the same truth in the phraseology of Philippians i. 29, where alike the power to believe and the call to suffer are seen as 'the gift' given to the saints. And I see it very clearly in a yet deeper and more suggestive connection in 2 Corinthians iv. 13, where the apostle speaks of himself and his fellow-workers as having the same spirit of faith with the Old Testament saints . . . what anywise the passage intimates is that faith is not of nature, but of grace. It is from above, not from the resources of human nature; it is the special and supernatural gift of God" (*Veni Creator,* p. 106). Abraham Kuyper deals trenchantly with the grammatical objection raised against this interpretation of the text in Ephesians ii. 8. He shows that *καὶ τοῦτο* is frequently employed where the antecedent would seem to demand a feminine form of the pronoun (*Work of the Holy Spirit,* pp. 407–14).

It is interesting to notice that here McLaren takes the opposite

view. He writes: "That is a plain misconception of the apostle's meaning, and is contradicted by the whole context. It is not faith that is the gift of God, but it is salvation by grace. That is plain if you will read on to the next verse . . . 'not of works?' Faith? Certainly not. Nobody would ever have thought it worth while to say 'faith is not of works' because nobody would have said that it *was*. The two clauses necessarily refer to the same thing: and if the latter of them must refer to salvation by grace, so must the former."

It is rather strange that McLaren should assent so confidently that nobody would have said that faith was of works. Possibly he never read the homily on *The Salvation of All Mankind*; but, had he done so, he would have discovered that Cranmer found it necessary to declare: "So that the true understanding of this doctrine—we be justified freely by faith without works, or that we be justified by faith in Christ only, is not that this our own act to believe in Christ, or this our faith in Christ, which is within us, doth justify us, and deserve our justification unto us—for that were to count ourselves to be justified by some act of virtue that is within ourselves—but the true understanding and meaning thereof is that, although we hear God's Word and believe it: although we have faith, hope, charity, repentance, dread and fear of God within us, and do never so many good works thereunto: yet we must renounce the merit of all our said virtues of faith, hope, charity and all our other virtues and good deeds, which we either have done, shall do, or can do, as things that be too weak and insufficient and imperfect to deserve remission of our sins and our justification." If Cranmer found it necessary to point out that faith secured justification not on the ground that it was an inherent virtue, it seems idle to declare that nobody ever said faith was a work. McLaren has been called, with much justice, a prince of expositors. But we have high authority for the warning: "Put not your trust in princes." Perhaps a paraphrase may make the meaning clear. "You have been saved by grace. True it is by means of faith. But even that does not emerge through any inherent power in you. It is God's gift to you. Therefore you have been saved not in any way as a consequence of your works so that no occasion of boasting remains to anyone."

Regeneration and Faith

This digression on the circumstances of the new birth and the origin of justifying faith has been necessary in order that the student may form a clear judgment on the relation between regeneration and justification which we set out to discuss. We are to essay an answer to the question: Does regeneration take place after rather than before the sinner is justified?

If we are to consider regeneration in the narrower sense of the term, and refer it to the moral change effected on the nature of man by

the power of the Holy Ghost, we would join with those who see in regeneration a prevenient act of the divine Spirit: an opening of blind eyes, a quickening from the dead.

We would insist, however, that, given the opportunity, as it will assuredly in God's good time, the regenerate soul, when possessed of consciousness, must believe. Belief is an immediate activity of the renewed heart. But it is the expression, not the condition of renewal. The faith which believes is our own, because it is an activity of our spirit. It is not our own, not an inherent virtue for which we can claim credit, because it is the result of the awakening, the renewal, wrought in us by the transcendent power of the Spirit of Faith. The command "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" is like the command "Stretch forth thine hand". Both are impossible to nature in the condition in which it is found. Both are made possible through the energizing power of the Son of God. Similarly the Christian who consciously believes is ushered by the cry of faith into the new circumstances that govern a walk in newness of life. The cry of faith is indeed the cry of the new-born child, but the cry is an expression of the life already possessed by the infant, and in no sense a completion of that life. It is more consistent with the general tenor of Scripture to speak of justfication as a gift bestowed by God, consequent upon regeneration, than to regard it as the completion of regeneration.

This is not a dead theology, against which McLaren quite rightly protests in the context of the passage we have recently quoted. It stands to the life of the soul in the same relation as biological theory stands to the life of the body. We can live without much biological theory. It is doubtful if we could live without any. But the clearer our biological knowledge, whether obtained directly or borrowed from competent scientists, the better use we can make of all the means of maintaining and developing life. The revelation of our entire dependence on God corresponds, in the analogy, to biological theory. The more we are thrown back on God, the greater will be our assiduity in living the life of faith which is the means of maintaining and developing our new life in Him. It was Samson who said: "I will go out as at other times before and shake myself" just because "he wist not that the Lord was departed from him".

The Relation of God's Work in the Soul to the Order of Our Being

It must ever be borne in mind that the work of God in relation to any of His creatures follows the order of that creature's original being. God created man with rational capacities. We may reasonably expect, therefore, that His work of grace will do no violence to the capacities He has created. It is in accordance with the divine provision that once the nature is quickened the response should result. Theologians are wont to distinguish between prevenient grace and co-operating grace.

The tenth article of the Church of England speaks of the "grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will". After that prevenient grace of God by which we will that which is good, we are still in need of the gracious Spirit's activity to keep us continually in the paths of righteousness. Even the renewed soul cannot operate effectively by means of its own independent power. It is sensitive to the leading of the Spirit and is thus unlike the heart hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. But the very sensitiveness of the new-born soul is an indication that it needs and is seeking further enabling. We must walk in the Spirit that we may not fulfil the lusts of the flesh (Gal. v. 16). We are now considering, however, the first human response of the newly awakened soul. Here we have, so to speak, the junction between the prevenient and the co-operating grace of God the Holy Spirit. It is not a passive experience because it is an activity of the soul. But it is the commencement of activity, the very first movement of our new being. It is at once the evidence that God has raised the dead soul to life and the first expression of the new life to which the soul has been raised. It is natural, with all the naturalness of any human volition. It works in exactly the same way as any great vision of high enterprise, vouchsafed to the sons of men. But the vision is different from any other vision, because it is a vision of God's infinite grace and man's desperate need. To secure an apprehension of such a vision and a suitable response to it a supernatural work is needed. St. Paul recognizes this truth when he says: "Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision" (Acts xxvi. 19).

Two elements coincided in the great decision which Paul there made. There was the human response in all its perfect naturalness. But there was, conditioning it, the heavenly message. But for the Spirit's gracious work, this message would have proved unintelligible, or distasteful, and therefore inoperative in the heart of Paul. It is because of this coincidence of the divine and the human that incautious language such as "I believed and therefore I was born again", to which reference has been made earlier, needs to be avoided.

The greatest care must be taken to exclude any suggestion that the reception of the divine message depends solely on unaided human volition. Lydia, "whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul" (Acts xvi. 14), is the classical example of this double movement and the relation of the divine and human elements in regeneration. The Lord opens the heart; the necessary result is an eager acceptance of the message. We cannot command the gracious operation which causes us to see. But, when sight is given, we cannot do otherwise than "behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world".

Regeneration and Baptism

There is a further important question to consider. If we accept Mozley's contention that regeneration is a state of actual goodness; if we adopt, further, the position just outlined, that the initial quickening movement must be followed, where there is consciousness or ideation, by an act of faith in Christ, which secures justification, then we have to ask: "What is the relation between regeneration and baptism? Many would contend, of course, that the question is wholly unnecessary. They regard the alleged connection between regeneration and baptism as a relic of medieval theology. The language in the formularies of the Church of England is said to reflect this unhappy inheritance. If this were indeed the case it might prove embarrassing to members of the Church of England, but all the rest who were free from the entanglements of such formularies could allow those who inherited them or adopted them to fight their own way out as best they could.

If it is argued that the Lutheran Church is as deeply or more deeply committed to this close connection between regeneration and baptism, the persons we have in view remain still unmoved. They contend that the Lutherans are also in the twilight. Did not they hold to the doctrine of ubiquity in relation to the Body of Christ? Those who are called Free Churchmen begin to feel very free indeed! They can look, it is thought, with mild concern on the vast ramifications of medieval misconceptions affecting Anglican and Lutheran as well as modern Roman Catholic formulation, while they themselves are untouched by such miasmic mists. One fears that the average modern Presbyterian is as little versed in the Westminster Confession as his brother Anglican is in the Thirty-Nine Articles. Still, it may be well to recall that the Assembly of Divines declare that "baptism is . . . ordained . . . not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life". It is important to add, lest any false impression should be created, that the framers of these strong assertions added in another section that "grace and salvation are not inseparably annexed unto (baptism), as that no person can be saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated". Still, the Assembly of Divines recognized a connection between regeneration and baptism. And there is yet another shock before the tale of difficulty is complete.

Some years ago, in the United States of North America, Alexander Campbell formed a body of people at first known as "Disciples of Christ" but afterwards as "Churches of Christ". They are not very well known in England, but have established themselves strongly in

the United States and are well represented in Australia and New Zealand. Alexander Campbell advocated the immersion of professed believers as the proper mode of following our Lord's command regarding baptism. The body formed through his influence has no binding credal statement such as the Westminster Confession of Faith or the Thirty-Nine Articles. As a consequence, it is not possible to attribute all the views of Campbell to all the adherents of the Churches of Christ. Still, it is correct to say that Campbell's textbook is in use amongst them as a work of considerable authority.

The feature of doctrine, related to our subject, in which Campbell differs from the usual position of those who hold to the Baptist attitude, is that he accepts a doctrine of baptismal regeneration. As the words "baptismal regeneration" are capable of more than one interpretation, it is advisable to state the position adopted by Campbell and those who still accept the teaching of his textbook. Mr. Campbell teaches quite definitely that salvation is obtained through belief in Christ and a public confession of that faith in baptism. Regeneration is completed by this public act. No one is regenerate unless and until he has been immersed. Baptism effects regeneration. The following quotation may explain his attitude: "To call the receiving of any Spirit or any influence, or energy or any operation upon the heart of man, regeneration is an abuse of all speech, as well as a departure from the diction of the Holy Spirit *who calls nothing personal regeneration except the act of immersion*" (*The Christian System*, p. 215).

We are thus confronted with the fact that several classes of people with different theological outlooks unite in asserting that there is a close connection between regeneration and baptism. In ordinary affairs when we are confronted with a situation of this sort we conclude that there must be some ground for this unity amongst those who differ widely in other matters. We regard it as undesirable, even as foolish, to refuse to consider the position. An explanation, indeed, may be found which shows that, notwithstanding the concurrence of interests which in other particulars are frequently in conflict, the agreement itself is due to a mistaken conception. But an explanation is demanded. We must resist that strange indifference to all profound study in theology which manifests itself in the tendency to fling aside, as worthless encumbrances, opinions that do not at once meet with our approval.

It must be observed, further, that the question proposed for consideration relates to the doctrine of baptism and not to the subjects or mode of baptism. The existence of the Churches of Christ compels the Baptist, who rejects the practice of baptizing infants and adheres to immersion as the proper mode of baptizing, to recognize that he still has to deal with the relation between regeneration and baptism. In endeavouring to discover the nature of this relation, several explanations present themselves.

(*a*) *The Augustinian and Medieval View.* Since the time of Augustine of Hippo, that remarkable Christian leader of the fifth century, the opinion has gained strong hold that there is an inherent righteousness, conferred by the grace of God, through which we are justified. This does not mean that Augustine fully accepted the later medieval doctrine, but he failed to make a clear-cut distinction between God's acquittal in the eyes of the law which we call justification, and God's renewal of the soul in regeneration and sanctification. The medieval Church developed the view of a conferred inherent righteousness and associated it definitely with the act of baptism. The three evangelical graces of faith, hope and charity are infused into the soul by means of baptism. Unless baptism is received, at least in desire, salvation is not possible. This is the official Roman Catholic view. The relation is perfectly clear. Baptism effects regeneration. But there are difficulties in this view and, outside the Roman Catholic Church, modifications have been introduced into it, even when it has not been wholly abandoned.

(*b*) *The Modified Infusion Theory.* Baptism is regarded by some as the beginning of the Christian life. By means of baptism a potentiality, which can be cultivated into an actuality, is conferred on the soul. It ought to be noticed that both Roman Catholics and those who hold the modified view we are now describing admit that a bar may be erected by the wilful sin of the recipient which hinders the reception of the grace of baptism. But both the Roman Catholics and those who hold the modified theory, while differing as to the exact nature of the grace conferred, maintain that the act of baptism, unless resisted, confers grace. Some of those who hold what we have called the modified infusion theory speak of baptism as conferring the "germ" of the new life. Illustrations and metaphors are helpful, but they are also dangerous. The "germ" theory has sometimes been pressed to a point where it is difficult to escape the conclusion that, apart from the initial communication of life, man is altogether his own saviour. But it is not quite fair to make a theory responsible for the excesses of some of its advocates. It is sufficient to point out the danger.

Many, but not by any means all, of the Laudian divines in England accepted the modified view that baptism conferred a potentiality through which the new life was realized when appropriated by faith. The evangelical section of the Laudians, which developed into the old-fashioned High Churchmen, held strongly that this inherent quality could not justify, and ranged themselves alongside the Reformed teaching on the necessity of conversion and the fact of justification by faith only.

(*c*) *The Federal Theory.* Waterland, who has been mentioned already, pressed this aspect so strongly that he comes very close to

what is known as the "federal" theory. The word "federal" conveys very little meaning to modern Bible students. It comes to us through the French from the Latin word "foedus", a league or covenant. Its essential meaning is an agreement between two parties.

A covenant, an arrangement with another, demands a mutual compact. When there can be no direct contact someone must be found who will undertake the negotiations, fulfil the necessary conditions, for a satisfactory arrangement. In such circumstances the arranging party is a mediator. Baptism is regarded as the sign of a covenant, entered into between God and the sinner, and, because of the relation between the parties, mediated through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Lord, who gives repentance and remissions of sins. This is the view of such writers as Calvin and Usher. Archbishop Usher states it very clearly in his *Body of Divinity,* which was published without his consent but undoubtedly represents his views. Usher wrote: "All the promises of grace were in my baptism estated upon me, and sealed up unto me, on God's part; but then I came to have the profit and benefit of them, when I came to understand what grant God, in baptism hath sealed unto me, and actually to lay hold on it by faith" (chap. xlii).

(*d*) *The Lutheran View.* Luther and the more rigid followers of Luther in the Lutheran Church (apparently Dr. Hilderbrandt refers to them as Gnesio-Lutherans. See his *Melanchthon—Alien or Ally,* pp. xii, 78) were impressed by the medieval assertions that baptism conferred grace. Luther was also possessed with the strong conviction that justification was by faith only. He sought a reconciliation between the two views by declaring that the blessings of baptism were conferred because of the existence of a seminal faith in the infant. "The infant is changed, cleansed and renewed by inpoured faith, through the prayer of the Church that presents it for baptism and believes" (Kerr, *A Compend of Luther's Theology,* p. 168). He does not appear to relate this particular view to his strong theories of predestination. It may be that he would assent that this seminal faith existed only in elect infants.

(*e*) *Modern Evangelical Tendencies.* There is a tendency in certain modern evangelical circles to pass by the question altogether and to concentrate on the imperative duty of conscious acceptance of our Lord Jesus Christ by faith. Where the subject is touched upon at all the view usually expressed is that baptism is the mode of admission into the visible Church, whether such admission is confined to those who profess faith or extended to include their children. Beyond that, baptism is regarded as a sign of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Some would further regard it as a confession of faith in our Lord. In Baptist circles this confession would be in the nature of a direct avowal of faith on the part of the recipient of baptism. In paedo-Baptist circles

it is regarded as a confession on the part of those who bring a child to baptism and as a general testimony of God's willingness to receive children so brought to Him. Baptism is a witness to an unbelieving world. Many insist that the baptism of infants should be in public, before a congregation, as a testimony to the need of cleansing if we are to enter the kingdom of heaven.

But those we have now in view would contend that no grace is conferred in baptism except that which results from obedience to a divine command. By "grace" they understand the conveyance of a particular benefit to the soul approximating, strangely enough, to the Roman Catholic usage of the term.

The New Testament Teaching Regarding the Relation Between Regeneration and Baptism

These seem to be the main views regarding the matter in hand. We recognize the obligation to test every opinion in the light of Scripture. With this object in view it is necessary to examine the various passages in the New Testament in which the subject of baptism is presented to us. Attention will be directed to the passages dealing with the doctrine on the subject. The first thing that strikes the attentive reader is the emphatic language of the New Testament. The baptismal commission, given by our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. xxviii. 19), reads: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

It is scarcely necessary to point out that the words rendered "teach" and "teaching" in our Authorized Version represent two wholly different words in the Greek. The Revised Version renders the former word, translated "teach", by the compound "make disciples".

It is generally true to say that when a Greek principal verb is followed by a participle, depending on it, a causal connection is implied. If we follow this rule, the passage would read: "Go ye and train as my disciples . . . by baptizing . . . by teaching." Baptism is thus the entrance into the school of Christ; its full significance is brought home to the neophyte by the further teaching which he shall receive. The word "disciple" implies the need of guidance and instruction, and, further, a willingness to abide by the instruction received. "The word maintains its classical connotation of compliance with the instruction given, the *μαθητής* is not only a *pupil* but an adherent" (Massie, Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, art. "Disciple").

Joseph of Arimathaea, we read, "himself was Jesus' disciple" (Matt. xxvii. 57). Bengel takes the word "was made a disciple" in a double sense. He became a disciple and was anxious to make others disciples also. The phrase used can mean only that Joseph submitted himself

to the obligations associated with adherence to the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is, therefore, a positive obligation associated with the act of baptism. It is even more relevant to our present purpose to notice carefully the words "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost". This is a remarkable pronouncement. It is well known that prepositions are used with a wider freedom in signification in Hellenistic Greek, which is the Greek of the New Testament, than was regarded as permissible in classical Greek. Robertson, in his valuable large Greek grammar, has given close attention to the varieties of usage. He suggests that the preposition εἰς, here used, is best rendered "in the sphere of". If we are to accept this determination of the meaning of the word we are forced to the conclusion that the sentence teaches that baptism brings us into a peculiar and direct relation to the Trinity. Nor is this an isolated instance. In many forms which do not depend on the exact construction associated with the use of a preposition the same idea is presented. In Romans vi. 4, 5, we read: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." St. James speaks of "the honourable name which was called upon you" (Jas. ii. 7, R.V. margin), which is most probably a reference to baptism. St. Paul further describes baptism as the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ (Col. ii. 11). He elsewhere makes the positive declaration: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. iii. 27). St. Peter says that baptism, as in a figure, saves us (1 Pet. iii. 21).

Attention should be given to the positive language used in all these instances. They all speak unconditionally. The same is true of the language used regarding the Holy Communion. Our Lord Jesus Christ said: "Take, eat, this is my body." St. Paul says: "The bread which we break is it not the communion of the body of Christ" (1 Cor. x. 16).

In relation to each of the sacraments the same emphatic language is employed. It might seem as if the performance of the required acts with the use of the appropriate words would create of themselves the spiritual experiences with which the acts and words are associated. As we have seen, a view somewhat approaching this opinion has been advanced in the medieval Church. The one qualifying circumstance resides in the assertion that it is possible to oppose a bar to the grace which is resident in the baptismal element. Aquinas does not hesitate to say that a certain virtue in the water communicates itself to the soul of the recipient. But we are precluded from any such ready solution regarding the use of this positive language by certain other

passages of an equally definite character which present an opposite view. They warn us that conditions belonging to the recipients are necessary if the spiritual results, depicted in the former passages, are to be realized. St. Paul said: "I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. iv. 19). To the baptized Romans he wrote: "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. viii. 9). Similarly we are told: "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself" (1 Cor. xi. 29). How can we reconcile these apparently contradictory passages? Dr. Moule, who supports the federal view of baptism, has a suggestive thought that may assist in effecting a reconciliation. He writes: "Baptism has been viewed as a federal convenanting transaction, and, in Scripture, *in cases of covenanting*, there is a tendency (not arbitrary, but natural) to use positive terms, and in *the present tense* about things which from another point are contingent and future; the visible token being taken for the coming reality (for example, Gen. xv. 18, Exod. xxxiv. 10, 11)" (*Outlines of Christian Doctrine*, p. 254).

An examination and expansion of the argument here indicated, especially in relation to the promise made to Abraham, may help to make it clear. God gave a promise to Abraham. "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xxii. 18). From one point of view that promise was unconditional. God had said it, and therefore it must be fulfilled. From another point of view the promise was conditional. Its fulfilment depended on the continuance of a faithful company amongst Abraham's descendants "till the seed should come to whom the promise was made". But the continuance of a faithful company depended on the fact that every faithful son of Abraham accepted for himself the terms of the promise and ordered his life in accordance therewith.

The Sign of the Covenant

The sign which God gave to Abraham as a guarantee that He would indeed fulfil His promise was circumcision. God commanded Abraham to commit this duty to his posterity (Gen. xvii. 10). Circumcision was at once a promise and an obligation. The prophets are most insistent on this double reference in the covenant sign. Here are a few typical messages illustrating this fact: "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings" (Jer. iv. 4). "All the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart" (Jer. ix. 26). "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live" (Deut. xxx. 6).

Thus we are confronted with the fact that the sign given to Abraham was continued as a token of God's favour and a guarantee of the fulfil-

ment of His promise, while at the same time it was received, in some instances, to condemnation. Indeed, in Jeremiah ix. 26 God declares He will punish the circumcised with the uncircumcised, because all the house of Israel, although they had received the token, were yet, in fact, as if they had been uncircumcised. Matthew Henry has the following valuable note on this passage: "The seals of the covenant, though they dignify us and lay us under the obligation, will not save us, unless the temper of our minds and the tenor of our lives agree with the covenant. That only is circumcision and that baptism, which is of the *heart* (Rom. ii. 28, 29)."

It might be argued that the condition of Israel here portrayed arose simply from an abuse of the divine ordinance. But such a facile explanation misses a profound truth which is forcibly brought to our notice. No distinction is made nor is any warning of a distinction given when Esau and Jacob were circumcised. Yet it is written: "I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau" (Mal. i. 2, 3). This passage is used by St. Paul to indicate God's inscrutable dealings according to the counsel of His own will (Rom. ix. 10–13). The argument is introduced by the very explicit declaration: "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Rom. ix. 6, 7). The unconditional promise "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" is here conditioned by the secret counsel of God. Dependent on this secret counsel, in ways still unknown to us, we have the further condition, to which the prophets so frequently refer: the hardness of heart manifested by many of those outwardly numbered among the chosen people. Yet, on the other hand, St. Paul, to whom we are indebted for this penetrating analysis, comments: "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" (Rom. iii. 3). There is something deeper than the admitted abuse of the divine ordinance. There is a purpose of God realizing itself in all the movements of men and triumphing even over the wilfulness which made the covenant sign spiritually inoperative.

Nor ought we lightly to turn aside with the easy reflection that all such experiences belonged to the old covenant. Apart from the very effective usage of them by St. Paul, we cannot fail to see that they are circumstances which attach alike to the dissemination of revelation and to the employment of any sign appointed for men by God. Augustine was not wrong in speaking of sacraments as *verbi visibili.* God's word likewise shall not return to Him void, and yet may become unprofitable to some through not being "united by faith with them that heard" (Heb. iv. 2, R.V.). There is here the same union of the unconditional and the conditional. Perhaps, to avoid the paradox, we may say there is here also the inevitableness of the result and yet, in a very real sense, the necessity of accompanying conditions.

By a careful consideration of the absolute language used concerning the earlier sign of the covenant and the operation of the Word of God we can understand the very positive language used of baptism and the equally positive declarations that some of the baptized were still "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity". The connection is that between a covenant and its sign. When the sign is given, the conditions are implied but not expressed. There is always an outward sealing—a sacramental incorporation into Christ. The principles on which the seal of the covenant are given must be in accordance with biblical conditions. But even where these principles are duly regarded, God's secret counsels are not revealed to the minister of the sacrament. Hence the reception of the sacramental seal (though the conferring of it, by a natural convention of speech, is expressed in the terms of the thing signified) does not involve the conclusion that all the sealed are made thereby the recipients of the blessing.

This use of the word "sacrament" as meaning "a sign of a spiritual thing" persisted for a long time in the Christian Church. Indeed, it is in use today even in unreformed circles. Berengarius, in the eleventh century, was compelled to declare that the body of Christ was truly present in the elements of bread and wine and *not after the manner of a sacrament.* The contrast implied in Cardinal Humbert's formula between "true" and "after the manner of a sacrament" throws into bold relief this ancient and scriptural usage of the term at the very time when alien conceptions were beginning to take root in the Church.

Brief Review of the Scriptural Evidence

Many further instances might be cited, but it seems best to review briefly the scriptural grounds on which the opinion rests, that the connection between the sacrament of baptism and regeneration is what Dimock calls "a federal connection"; in the language of an older school of theologians, that the sacrament "exhibits" to the recipient the covenant of which regeneration is the blessing. Care must be taken when employing this language to give to the word "exhibit" its old classical connotation. In this older usage "exhibit" was the literal rendering of the Latin verb "exhibere" and meant "to hold out for acceptance" and not simply "to show".

The Old Testament signs, given to the Jewish people, are spoken of in the same way as the New Testament signs. This applies particularly to circumcision and the passover. Indeed, the similarity of language was so evident to the scholastic theologians that it led them to propound the interesting theological problem: "Did the sacraments of the Old Law convey grace?" This particular question was variously answered. When the passover was instituted the following injunction was laid upon the people: "And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye

shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses" (Exod. xii. 26, 27). Again: "And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt" (Exod. xiii. 8. Cf. Deut. vi. 20). Here the language is positive. In one form at least it expresses a past experience in the present tense. In the case of the covenant with Abraham (Gen. xiii) the future is expressed in terms of the present, covering a whole range of history. But there is, further, a very considerable expansion of the covenant or federal idea in connection with the rite of circumcision. The prophets found it necessary to exhort the Israelites actually to circumcise their hearts. The reason is explained by Paul. Circumcision, he tells us, was a seal of the righteousness of faith. But he insists that Abraham possessed this faith "in uncircumcision" (Rom. iv. 10–12). Yet this seal of the righteousness of the faith which Abraham possessed "yet being uncircumcised" was given to his descendants as a seal of the righteousness of a faith they were called upon to exercise. The seal came first, the righteousness of faith of which it was the seal came after. The expansion at the hands of the prophets and the clear exposition in the Epistle to the Romans indicates, quite definitely, that the Old Testament uses positive language concerning the bestowal of God's gifts, and at the same time warns us against a too ready assumption that the language of definite bestowal involved, of necessity, the actual reception of the gifts sealed up to the recipient. The fulfilment of the promise, from the human standpoint, required the conditions of faith and obedience in the recipient. Added force is given to this presentation by the fact that in the New Testament the Israelites are charged by John the Baptist with falling into the error of imagining that their kinship and religious association with Abraham were sufficient to secure for them the blessings of the covenant. He calls for repentance, crying: "And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father" (Matt. iii. 9).

There is one passage of Scripture which is frequently urged as teaching that baptism effects regeneration in every case, at least if no barrier is offered by man's sinful resistance. It may be desirable in view of the many controversies that cluster round this passage to examine it a little in detail. It will be found that it does not oppose the main tenor of Scripture, as that has been presented above. Our Lord, when speaking to Nicodemus, said: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5). There are at least three interpretations of these words offered. Calvin maintains that the passage has no connection with baptism, and would interpret it of the divine cleansing mediated by the Word of God. Students of Jewish literature say that water is

frequently used in the sense of the human semen, and suggest that it means: "Except a man be born by natural procreation and also born of the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God." They make the following words "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" explicative of the preceding words. The third view (for which support is claimed in the exhortation in the Church of England Baptismal Service) relates the text to baptism. Those who accept this third view differ on the question: Is the direct reference to John's baptism or to Christian baptism? Those favouring a direct reference to Christian baptism say that the text is proleptic, as Christian baptism was not then instituted. Those favouring a direct reference to John's baptism relate the passage to the fact that Nicodemus came at night and therefore it may be assumed that he had not publicly identified himself with the mission of John the Baptist. His weakness, at the moment, lay in his reluctance to make a public stand. They point out, in support of this contention, that John seems anxious in his gospel to mark this development in the faith of Nicodemus. At the last he associates himself with Joseph of Arimathaea in a public act of reverence to the body of Jesus. He notes that Joseph was secretly a disciple for fear of the Jews and that Nicodemus came to Jesus at first by night (John xix. 39). Mark seems to have the same thought concerning the growth in the faith of Joseph of Arimathaea, for he notes that he "went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus" (Mark xv. 43). The difference between coming by night and bringing spices openly illustrates the spiritual progress made by Nicodemus in the interval. If we accept this opinion our Lord's meaning would be: "There is an external acknowledgement or act of submission—'born of water'—which, if it is truly prompted by the Spirit, gives entrance to the kingdom. Nicodemus, you cannot keep coming by night. Sooner or later you must come out into the open."

Bishop Westcott, whose authority as a student of Greek cannot be disputed, draws attention to the fact that the preposition "of" is not repeated and the article is wanting from both substantives. The words in Greek do not read "born of water and of the Spirit". They read "born of water and Spirit". He argues from this construction that there are not two separate processes distinguished by an interval of time. "The general inseparability of these two is indicated by the form of the expression *born of water and Spirit,* as distinguished from the double phrase *born of water and of Spirit.*" This is true; but on the interpretation we suggest it leaves the argument untouched. The idea is not that there must be an interval of time between the two processes mentioned. Rather is it that there is a permanent relation between the two, alike in John's baptism and in the Christian system.

The new birth has its external sign as well as its internal reality. There must be the coincidence of these if the blessing indicated by the

outward sign is to be experienced by those who receive it. But, in point of fact, this coincidence is rarely, if ever, in time. Paul received the inward reality and some days afterwards submitted in faith to the external sign. The dying thief received the inward reality and had no opportunity of experiencing the blessing of the external sign. The coincidence is neither essential in every case nor is it inseparable in time. It is a coincidence in thought conditioned by the fact of the divine command and its associated promise. Those who contend that baptism should be restricted to those who profess faith in Christ would declare that the individual receives the seal of regeneration because of the credible evidence that he has experienced the inward peace. That evidence consists in his outward profession of faith. Those who would plead for the admission of children to the covenant would plead that faith itself is the gift of God, and, relying on the promises to the seed of believers, would insist that the seal is given in anticipation of the acceptance by faith of the covenant of grace. The fact that the seal can be received unworthily does not impair the coincidence resident in the divine purpose. It only shows the weakness which must attach to all human administration of the gifts of God because we are not, mercifully, endowed with complete foreknowledge, or admitted to all the mysteries attaching to the divine call. Professed believers, such as Simon, can reject the obligation to which, in outward form, they have submitted. Children who are covenanted to God can reject the terms of the covenant and repudiate the obligations imposed on them. In neither case is the divine coincidence between the external sign and the internal reality realized in the individual. Yet we are warned that while this is the case, while it stands written "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated", there is a coincidence according to which "the purpose of God according to election" stands. We can penetrate but a little way into the eternal region of God's unfailing decree. But we have the divine assurance that, just because salvation is of free grace and is wrought in all cases by the Living Spirit, the faith of God will prove effective. Just as He honours His Word that it shall not return unto Him void, so will He honour His sacraments. The coincidence in the purpose and mind of God knows no variation.

The external call, whether in word or sacrament, will be accompanied by the internal call which brings blessing to the soul, whensoever it pleases God, who calls men from their mothers' womb, to reveal His Son in them. The faith of God will prove effective notwithstanding the sinfulness of man. "God sent . . . his Son into the world . . . that the world through him might be saved." It is on grounds such as these that many have decided that the "federal" view of baptism appears to be the best way of combining the scriptural evidence in a coherent whole.

CHAPTER III

REGENERATION AND PERSEVERANCE

Can Regeneration Be Lost?

A very important question has disturbed the minds of God's children for many years. Taking regeneration in the narrower sense of a true spiritual work of God on the individual, the question that arises is: Can such a definite experience be completely lost or nullified? It is not necessary to point out that wide differences of opinion exist on this point. Pelagius, if indeed he held the doctrine of personal regeneration, would be bound to say that any man could freely move away from the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit and throw himself back into his former unbelief and sin. Most of those who hold that the debilitated will of man requires the assistance of divine grace lean to the view that not only can assistance be declined in the first instance, but after it has been received and acted upon it can still be definitely resisted until it is finally lost.

As a rule the followers of Augustine have inclined to the theory of what is known as "indefectible grace", more generally called "final perseverance". The Calvinists developed and adopted Augustine's view.

In the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century opinion was sharply divided on the matter. Toplady, Whitfield and Newton were all convinced Calvinists. John and Charles Wesley, Fletcher of Madeley and many others described themselves as Evangelical Arminians. Dr. Rattenbury tells us that nothing did so much to destroy popular Calvinism in England as Charles Wesley's hymns (*The Evangelical Doctrine of Charles Wesley's Hymns,* p. 121). The controversy is still with us and is likely to remain to the end of time.

Here, also, there is great need to pay close attention to the data we find in the New Testament.

It may, perhaps, be well at the outset to indicate that, in the view of the writer, the New Testament evidence favours the opinion that regeneration, once experienced, is a permanent possession of the soul. The conviction is not asserted with the object of closing investigation. Neither is there any desire to cast discredit upon the earnest labours of those who bring in a different verdict. The sole object of the avowal is to assist those who are not convinced to watch with great closeness the processes of the argument. In this way they will be delivered from any danger of yielding a too ready credence to what, on closer examination, might prove to be a doubtful exegesis. Unless

readers are encouraged to examine for themselves the messages of God's Word there is little use in writing books about them.

The first consideration to which we would direct attention is the remarkable descriptive language in the New Testament. This inner change is spoken of as "a new birth". It is an experience of being "born from above". The very language emphasizes that new birth is an experience that is unique. Following what has already been pointed out, it is necessary to remind ourselves afresh that the language used refers to the communication of new life. It is not, as some have urged, a change of condition; it is not simply the ushering of an already living creature into a new and partly independent mode of life. It is the actual communication of life itself.

Nicodemus, at least, realized that fact. He bursts out with the question: "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" (John iii. 4). Here Westcott seems to catch the real inwardness of the question asked by Nicodemus. He interprets: "How is it possible for a man whose whole nature at any moment is the sum of all the past to start afresh? How can he undo or do away with the result which years have brought and which goes to form himself? His 'I' includes the whole development through which he has passed: and how then can it survive the new birth? Can the accumulation of long ages be removed and the true 'self' remain?" (*Commentary on St. John, in loco*). So the change indicated is the most radical we can conceive. It is the complete uprooting of the long-established being, conditioned by the processes from early life to mature age ("when he is old"), and its entire reconstitution. It will hardly be denied that such a change posits a measure of permanency. A dear old friend of the writer's was a diligent attender at open-air meetings, not always marked by order and quiet. Sometimes the hymn "Ye must be born again" was sung. The dear old man revelled in the chorus, which he insisted on rendering "Ye must be born again and again." Finishing with a long-drawn note, he assured all and sundry: "Ye must be born again—and—again." The language of the New Testament does not readily lend itself to this conception of repeated transformations of such a wide-spread character. It would prove of little assistance to Nicodemus to assure him that the change which filled him with astonishment could not only occur once but, in point of fact, could be repeated more than once. Nor does the divine Saviour's explanation lend any colour to the idea of frequent repetition. He meets Nicodemus' difficulty by referring to the operation of the divine Spirit. The original birth is of the flesh. Westcott is surely right again in seeing here no suggestion of evil, but simply the characteristic principle of two orders.

But the Saviour does not minimize the radical nature of the change. Rather He indicates that there is present here the very supernatural

operation of the Holy Spirit, which was also manifest at the creation of the world. The uniqueness of the operation effected renders the idea of a repetition one of great difficulty.

Nor can we be charged with resting our whole case on one powerful image. Such an image might be sufficient to sustain the weight of the argument, but there is no necessity to maintain such a position. St. Paul, when describing the same experience, writes: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. v. 17). The Revised Version gives point to the illustration by inserting in the margin "there is a new creation", and altering the last phrase to read: "behold they [the old things] are become new." Creation does not happen every day. The change that a man in Christ experiences is "a new creation". Here again the language definitely leads us to expect permanence.

It may possibly occur to some reader that, although this language is very powerful and does indicate a degree of permanence, yet it is not so absolutely convincing as to preclude the possibility of all change. It can be pointed out that natural birth is succeeded by death, and that not only did the old world perish by water but there will be a new heaven and a new earth, since the first heaven and the first earth will pass away. These considerations need to be taken into account. They would indicate, in themselves considered, that the cessation of life thus communicated, while it must not be regarded as usual, yet cannot be ruled out as impossible.

In reply, it seems pertinent to observe that the very factors on which the argument relies were present to the minds of the New Testament writers. St. Peter writes: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1 Pet. i. 23). In this text there is a double correction of any idea of lack of permanency based on the analogy drawn from natural seed. In the first place, the spiritual seed is contrasted as well as compared with the corruptible seed of natural birth. It is "incorruptible". The particular adjective is used seven times in the New Testament. Twice it refers to God (Rom. i. 23: 1 Tim. i. 17, where the A.V. renders "immortal"); once it refers to the believer's crown (1 Cor. ix. 25; once to the believer's inheritance (1 Pet. i. 4); once to spiritual adornment (1 Pet. iii. 4); once to the resurrection body (1 Cor. xv. 52); and once, in the passage quoted, to the heavenly seed. There seems little doubt, in view alike of the usage of the word and also of its derivation by negative from the verb *φθείρω*, "to destroy", that we are intended to mark a contrast between the corruptible seed of nature and that which is in its own nature imperishable. The second contrast is brought before us by the words: "By the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." If the Word of God, by means of which we are born again,

liveth and abideth for ever, it seems a reasonable inference that the product of the seed must exhibit the same characteristic.

There remains for consideration the further contention that because the creation itself shall give place to a new creation we may likewise assume that the creative power in the new life may be susceptible to decay. But it must not escape our notice that St. Paul anticipates this very objection. He points out that the creation itself shall be delivered from corruption; he emphasizes that this deliverance is into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. We, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, "groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom. viii. 23). The renewal in grace is a foretaste of that regeneration of which our Lord spoke (in Matt. xix. 28) and to which we referred as giving the wider meaning of regeneration. Here a link is established between the narrower and the wider concepts. It is surely not without significance that this contrast between corruption and incorruption and this parallel between a renewed earth and a renewed soul should be brought so prominently under our notice.

It may be profitable in this connection to refer to St. Paul's statement in 2 Timothy i. 10 that our Saviour Jesus Christ "abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel" (R.V.). We can compare this with St. John's statement: "And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life" (1 John v. 11, R.V.). If the immortal life, the imperishable, the permanent, is brought to light by the gospel, then it must follow that the new birth, which is of the Spirit, is eternal in character and cannot be destroyed.

It is not surprising that the life promised to the believer is *eternal* life. Whatever may be the meaning attached to the word "eternal", we cannot eliminate from it the character of a quality which is opposed to the transient. Westcott, in his comment on John iii. 14, 15, marks this contrast as follows: "As the wounded who looked on the brazen serpent were restored to temporal health, so in this case *eternal life* follows from the faith of the believer on the crucified and exalted Lord." It may be said, therefore, that the general tendency in scriptural language is to assign permanency to the gift of the new life and to discourage any idea that it is transient in character.

Support Claimed for Another View

But if this were all, it would be indeed difficult to account for the great number of earnest students who have felt compelled to declare that the gift of life may be forfeited. For example, Westcott, who is not insensible to the importance of the considerations that have just been urged, has, nevertheless, the following note on John x. 27, 28: "The

doctrine of 'final perseverance' has been found in this passage. But we must carefully distinguish between the certainty of God's promises and His infinite power on the one hand, and the weakness and variableness of man's will, on the other. If man falls at any stage in his spiritual life, it is not from want of divine grace, nor from the overwhelming power of adversaries, but from his neglect to use that which he may or may not use. We cannot be protected against ourselves in spite of ourselves. He who ceases to hear and to follow is thereby shown to be no true believer (1 John. ii. 19). The difficulty in this case is only one form of the difficulty involved in the relation of an infinite to a finite being. The sense of the divine protection is at any moment sufficient to inspire confidence, but not to render effort unnecessary. Cf. vi. 37, 39, 40, 44f. St. Paul combined the two thoughts in Philippians ii. 12f."

A modern generation finds it difficult sometimes to understand the amazing influence of Westcott on the students of his time. The great Cambridge trio, Westcott, Hort and Lightfoot, have written an imperishable page in the history of English exegesis of the Scripture. Yet it must be said that Westcott, like all great men, had his limitations. This note on John x offers an illustration of that fact. Of course, the problem of final perseverance contains in it one form of the difficulty involved in the relation of an infinite to a finite being, and, of course, also, any application of the idea of final perseverance that would seek to make effort unnecessary would be false to some of the essential principles of the gospel. But when we have granted all that, it is still necessary to ask what the teaching of the New Testament is on this important question.

If it be true, as Westcott indicates, that "he who ceases to hear and to follow is thereby shown to be no true believer", what is it that operates on the weak and variable will of the true believer in such a way as to deliver him from a final vacillation on eternal issues which would otherwise destroy his standing in Christ Jesus our Lord? To say that the problem is difficult does not relieve us from the necessity of solving it, if the solution be given to us within the compass of divine revelation. If it is not so given we can abandon all further inquiry and confess that we have here reached the limits of human understanding.

The defect in Westcott's treatment is that it places the weak human will in contrast to the divine enabling, whereas the text asserts, "My sheep hear my voice . . . they follow me", thereby giving clear indication that those who are spoken of as our Lord's sheep have a definite attitude of heart and mind, which secures attention to the divine Word and obedience to the divine will. This is made more emphatic by the preceding verse: "But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." Here Westcott truly observes: "The fault lies not in the lack of witness. It is the power to apprehend it which is wanting." May we not add that power to apprehend is the gift of the new life wrought

by the Holy Spirit, and carries, as a consequence, those blessed experiences which are described in verses 27 and 28?

False Assurance

Our attention must now be directed to several passages of Scripture that warn against a too great confidence regarding our final security, passages which are naturally given prominence by those who believe that in this matter there exists an unresolved antinomy between God's eternal purpose and man's free will. That such passages exist must be at once admitted. It must also be conceded that a false assurance is a great menace to spiritual life. From the writer's point of view, the passages in question may be divided into two classes. There are those which lay down certain conditions and times as essential to the final attainment of eternal life, and others which seem to assert that grace received may be wholly lost. We shall study the matter under these two headings.

In the New Testament eternal life is not only spoken of as a present possession; it is also presented as the final consummation of blessedness. God will grant eternal life to them who, by patience in well-doing, seek for glory and honour and incorruption (Rom. ii. 7). "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. xxiv. 13). "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (Heb. iii. 14). There are many such passages, and they offer a salutary warning against slothfulness. The soul that rests on past achievements or grows weary in well-doing is here advised that the goal of blessedness is not for such.

Perhaps the strongest passage of this sort that can be tabled is the well-known saying of St. Paul: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. ix. 27). Charles Wesley, in one of his more controversial and less devotional hymns, makes considerable capital out of this text. He wrote:

God is unchangeable
And therefore so are you;
And therefore they can never fail
Who once his goodness knew;
In part perhaps you may,
You cannot wholly fall,
Cannot become a castaway
Like non-elected Paul.[1]

However much we may deplore the bitterness in these lines, we cannot altogether close our eyes to the fact that men of earnest mind felt that they were unable to interpret Paul's language except as

[1] Rattenbury, *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns*, p. 120.

indicating that there existed a possibility that even the chosen vessel, who was the preacher of God's grace among the Gentiles, might, through negligence, fail of the final reward.

Those who turn away impatiently from such forebodings make a grave mistake. The great truth of permanent regeneration is not served by ignoring the careful warnings of the Word of God. A too facile assurance of salvation must not be confused with the Bible teaching on the election of grace. Let us, therefore, consider more closely this passage from Paul's writings, as representing those scriptural quotations which set out the essential conditions which must be present if we are to attain the final end of believers.

There are three main methods of interpreting the text.

(1) This first is the method adopted by Charles Wesley. Here we are told that Paul distinctly says that if he fails in the sacred duty of discipline, even though he has preached to others, he himself will be "cast as rubbish to the void when God has made the pile complete". It is impossible, in the light of this passage, either to "faintly trust the larger hope" or to hold with confidence that the regenerate shall, in all circumstances, continue to advance in holiness and shall ultimately enter heaven. St. Paul definitely admits the possibility that he may, finally, be lost.

(2) An alternative view has found acceptance with a very large number of expositors. They contend that St. Paul has not in mind the alternative of final loss or heavenly gain. On the contrary, he is thinking of the judgment of rewards which will appertain to those who have been redeemed, those tokens of the divine approval which are given or withheld from the saints according to the nature of their service here below. The test which Paul fears he may not pass successfully is not the test applied for salvation but the test applied to service. They would seek to weaken the strong "castaway", which has in it the suggestion of total rejection, and substitute for it the less determinate word "disapproved". They would then relate the passage to the earlier message in 1 Corinthians, where Paul speaks of a man being saved, yet so as by fire (1 Cor. iii. 15). There can be no doubt that the word ἀδόκιμος can bear this, shall we say, diluted meaning. The verb is used frequently of assaying metals and has the general sense of tried, tested, approved. Therefore the participle can readily mean disapproved, failing the test.

It is not so evident, however, that the test has no reference to final rejection from the kingdom of God, but is the test of worthiness in believers. That it may be so is possible; that it must be so is by no means so clear. The Pauline usage generally is opposed to it. In 2 Corinthians xiii. 5 we read: "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" The seventh verse exhorts the Corinthians to do no evil, not to supply a test by which

Paul and his companions might appear as approved, but to do what is honest or seemly, even though their teachers appear to be reprobate. The language of Romans i. 28, where those who refused God are given over to a reprobate mind, points in the same direction as does 2 Timothy iii. 8: "men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith." There is no passage in the New Testament in which the word means unmistakably "rejected from the privilege of reward". The general impression is rather "failing to stand the test and rejected as worthless".

If we were to depend on the employment of the word ἀδόκιμος to establish our position we would have to confess that usage is against us. That would not close the controversy, because it would still be possible to declare that the weight of Scripture compelled us to supply the lower meaning here and to interpret the passage in accordance with 1 Corinthians iii. 15: "He himself shall be saved, even if he is rejected for the higher award of service."

(3) But it does not appear necessary to resort to this Draconian method of exegesis. There is still a third alternative which does not force us to reject the whole weight of New Testament evidence as to the meaning of this word in order to extricate ourselves from difficulty. The passage is one of those which lay down the essential conditions of final salvation. Unless the apostle buffets his body and brings it into subjection, even his preaching to others offers no guarantee of his acceptance in the day of God's Great Assize. Hence the evidence of the possession of spiritual life is the daily exercise of spiritual graces. "I cannot," says Paul, "preen myself on my acceptance in Christ if I am the subject of waywardness and fleshly desire. Unless my body is subject to the mind by which I serve the law of God I may be living in a delusion and experience a rude awakening." St. Paul had just asserted that the goal and the reward are sure: the prize, moreover, is for every runner in the heavenly race. "I run not as uncertainly as those who strive against competitors and may eventually be worsted in the struggle."[1]

Shall this, then, breed in him a slothful negligence? On the contrary, it will impel him to great watchfulness. The criterion of his success lies in his steady adherence to the laws that govern the spiritual life. "Unless I buffet my body I shall be found at the last not to have become unworthy in the midst of the struggle, but to have been unworthy all through. The test will have established my unfitness for the conflict, and that unfitness discovers to me the fact that I have not been born again."

[1] Another interpretation refers the uncertainty not to the result but to the manner of running. But the second illustration, "not as one that beateth the air", supports the view that what St. Paul had in mind was the certainty of success in the conflict.

"The regenerate life is the victorious life. True, I may be overborne by a flood of temptation and afterwards may be restored to the favour of God again. But while I am overborne the evidence is lost; I cannot pride myself then on any past experience. Beaten and humiliated, I can say only that victory is mine again in the strength of the Lord. I have no assurance that I am really accepted as a competitor for the incorruptible crown."

The Corinthians needed that warning because they were overconfident of their spiritual prowess. With true tactfulness St. Paul places himself in the category of the competitor, and says of himself what required to be said of his readers: "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." The incidents in the wilderness are used to point the same moral. St. Paul ends with the exhortation: "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." He who deems himself secure is already in danger. He who is watchful against the wiles of the evil one is manifesting most truly the grace and power of God. Lest our watchfulness should degenerate into morbidness, we have the assurance that "God will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able".

It is not necessary, therefore, to conclude that those passages which lay down the essential conditions of spiritual progress and warn against slothfulness in the Christian life compel us to believe that regeneration, once given, may yet be lost. They warn us against an over-confidence that may exist where the real change of heart has not been experienced. They express, finally, the truth that runs right through the New Testament, that fruit unto God is the only satisfactory evidence of a real spiritual change. They warn us that the seed may even spring up quickly and then wither away, because it has no depth of earth. But they do not compel us to hold that seed sown in an honest and good heart, prepared by the Holy Spirit, will ultimately prove unfruitful.

Falling from Grace

We must turn now to examine the second group of scriptural passages to which we have referred. Not only are there general statements that the criterion of final victory is endurance unto the end, but there are other passages which, according to many expositors, definitely assert that grace received may be so abused as to be wholly lost.

Of course, everyone admits that some grace may be given and may be so abused that no final spiritual result issues. The older Calvinistic divines, who were most rigid in acceptance of "final perseverance", were also careful to speak of "common grace", and frequently gave the term a very wide connotation. Romans xii. 6 and the following verses advise us that the grace of God is manifested in the ordinary affairs of

life, just as truly, though with a different object, as the grace of God which bringeth salvation. But we are not dealing with such matters at the moment. The passages we have in mind are those biographical notices which speak of rejected blessings of a high spiritual order, blessings which were once experienced, and, secondly, certain direct statements as to the impossibility of renewal to repentance of those who fall away.

(*a*) *Judas Iscariot*

Of the biographical notices the most startling is that of Judas Iscariot. He is called the son of perdition, and St. Peter tells us "he went to his own place". The words of the Psalmist are regarded by the apostles as a prophecy of his transgression: "Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric let another take" (Acts i. 20). But was he ever a true believer? The passage usually cited to establish the fact that Judas was not only externally an apostle but at one period of his life a true believer in our Lord Jesus Christ is found in the great High Priestly prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ. We read in John xvii. 12: "Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled." Here, it is said, is a clear statement that one of those given was lost, the son of perdition. This is a solemn warning that he who thinketh he standeth must take heed lest he fall.

We would not lightly deny that the case of Judas is a solemn warning to all of us, and again we would point out that a facile assurance may prove a real menace to true spiritual experience. But that is not the point. Westcott helps us here when he remarked: "The excepting phrase (*ἐι μή*) does not necessarily imply that Judas is reckoned among those whom the Lord 'guarded'. The exception may refer simply to the statement, 'not one perished'. (Cf. Matt. xii. 4; Luke iv. 26, 27; Gal. i. 19, ii. 16; Rev. xxi. 27. Contrast Rev. xviii. 9.)" This introduces us to a knotty point of Greek grammar. A careful study of the references supplied by Westcott will make it quite clear that the exceptive clause does not relate to the class of persons mentioned but to the verb. None could eat the shewbread but the priests; Elias was sent to none save the widow of Sarepta; no lepers were cleansed save Naaman; no one was seen save James, the Lord's brother; no one is justified save by the faith of Jesus Christ; no one enters heaven save those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life; none perish but the son perdition. The biographical instances do not establish that regeneration, once experienced, can afterwards be lost.

(*b*) *The Warnings in the Epistle to the Hebrews*

There remain some important passages that have occasioned much perplexity and which must now be considered. The most formidable of these occur in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Twice over in that epistle a very solemn warning is addressed to those who have had a real spiritual experience. In Hebrews vi. 4–6 we read: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." Again, in Hebrews x. 26–9 we read: "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"

There are other passages which look in the same direction, but by common consent these two solemn warnings are regarded as the most formidable barriers to any confident assertion that regeneration, once given by the grace of God, can never again be lost. Dr. Moule writes concerning these two passages: "Hebrews vi. 4–6, x. 26–7 have struck deep into human hearts. Rightly, in the case of the man satisfied with himself and his light, and relaxing his watch. But in very different cases, they have given an alarm surely not meant by their divine Author. In both, the thought is of the possession of intense light rather than divine *life* and *love*. Balaam's story illustrates every detail of Hebrews vi. 4–6 (*Outlines of Christian Doctrine*, p. 46).

First of all, we must reject the interpretation which lays emphasis on the fact that Hebrews vi. 4–6 speaks only of those who have *tasted* of the heavenly gift. The use of this word, it is suggested, expresses or implies a contrast between those who have had a slight experience and those who have had a deeper experience. The use of the word "tasted" in this epistle and in other portions of the New Testament precludes any such interpretation. Hebrews ii. 9 tells us that Jesus "by the grace of God should taste death for every man" and 1 Peter ii. 3 speaks of those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious. In its metaphorical usage the verb "to taste" means "to experience" and leaves quite open the question as to the depth of that experience. There seems no implied difference in having tasted of the heavenly gift and having become partakers of the Holy Ghost. We cannot escape the force of

the words by suggesting that the persons in view have had only a very superficial acquaintance with the things of God.

But there are other considerations that check any hasty assumption that we are here supplied with unmistakable evidence that the persons contemplated were truly regenerate souls. The language of the text is striking. There is a change of tense which needs to be considered. Westcott directs attention to it. Those who are in view had some very remarkable and definite experiences set out in full. At a certain point they were enlightened, tasted the heavenly gift, became partakers of the Holy Ghost, tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come. At a certain point they fell away. All this depicts definite experiences. Once for all the light found access to them. With equal definiteness they fell away. No reasons are given, but from a study of the whole epistle it is clear that they went back to the Judaism from which they had emerged.

There follows a change of thought. It is impossible to renew such persons to repentance, not because they fell after enlightenment, but because they are crucifying afresh or again the Son of God and putting Him to an open shame. The change in tense is significant. We might have expected the aorist participles throughout. It would seem so much simpler to say: "Those who fell away crucified the Son of God again and put him to an open shame; therefore it is impossible to renew them to repentance." But the sense given is different. The Revised Version here attempts to convey the meaning by the marginal reading, "the while they crucify to themselves the Son of God", so that, after all, the impossibility is relative and not absolute. The attitude of heart which continues to deny the Lord who bought them constitutes the difficulty.

An objector may say here that this exegesis evades the difficulty that is raised. Granted that there is only a relative and not an absolute impossibility, we are still faced with a text which says that true Christians fell away so grievously that the task of awakening repentance is beset with peculiar difficulty and certainly may never be accomplished. That is a fair objection and must be met. It seems equally fair, on the other hand, to point out what the text does not say, although Spurgeon once wittily remarked that if a man is short of a sermon he can always overcome his difficulty by doing this! But in spite of Spurgeon's jest, there are sometimes significant omissions that have their place in a sound interpretation. We cannot expect a writer to employ the phraseology that is peculiar to his neighbour, and therefore the absence of any such expressions would not count at all in determining his meaning. But we can expect a writer to use his own familiar terminology. It is remarkable, therefore, that there is no mention of the attitude of the persons in view to the High Priestly sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no statement that they believed; that they were in faith; that they embraced the promises;

that they were sanctified by the offering of the Son of God; that they had entered into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. The phrases employed in this epistle to describe the experience of faith as possessed by those who are regarded as the true sons of the covenant are significantly absent. Had they been present the task of the expositor would have been rendered so much the harder.

Next we must notice the verses that follow: "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." The text is a problem to translators and interpreters. Literally it reads: "better things, things bordering on or seizing hold of salvation." Moffatt, as usual when a textual problem of this kind arises, boldly gives us what he thinks the writer ought to have said: "Though I say this, beloved, I feel sure you will take the better course that means salvation." The Revised Version gives a marginal reading: "things that are near to salvation." It is not straining the meaning to suggest that the sense might readily be: "better things which have in them the promise of salvation." What are these better things? They are given in the form of an illustration. The land, one piece of land, drinketh in the rain, the same rain. But it may react differently. It may bring forth herbs to meet the need of the dressers, or it may bring forth thorns and briers. In the latter case, it is rejected and is near to a curse. The better things are the fruits of holiness. Surely it is not an accident that the imagery of the parable of the sower is here employed. The one thing lacking is the prepared soil. The same gifts of God that produced herbs meet for man and invited His blessing are poured on an unfruitful soul and the result is a crop of worthless weeds, whose end is to be burned.

There is yet one difficulty that has perplexed students of this passage. How can those who receive the gifts of God in vain be spoken of as "partakers of the Holy Ghost"? The answer may be found in the whole tone of the epistle. In the judgment of the author the special feature of the new covenant is found in "signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost" (Heb. ii. 4). The person who is introduced into this fellowship of the saints must have some experience of the new light which has come into the world; some knowledge of the heavenly gift; some share in the operations of the divine Spirit. The powers of the world to come were open to his gaze. The epistle directly suggests that those who had first-hand experience of the new power of the gospel in the company of the believers could not but be in some sense sharers in the Holy Ghost, even if it were only in the sense of being witnesses to His grace in the hearts of God's children and to those external manifestations of His power which were given in the early Church.

The term used raises the question: Can there be an experience of the Holy Ghost which is real in itself and yet is not saving? The

answer seems to be given, so far as this epistle is concerned, in x. 29, where some are accused "of doing despite unto the Spirit of grace". They were so far sharers in the Spirit's operation that to them the message came in the fullness of the new dispensation in which the Spirit Himself takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us. The same thing is suggested in the gospels, where blasphemy against the Son of Man is contrasted with blasphemy against the Holy Ghost (Matt. xii. 31; Mark iii. 28, 29). The difference appears to be that in the case of blasphemy against the Son of Man there is an external participation, in so far as the blasphemer is brought into contact with the sayings and doings of our Lord. But in the case of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost there is an internal conviction which is resisted from unworthy motives. In the words of the Epistle to the Romans, they refused to "retain God in their knowledge" (i. 28).

So much has been said on this passage that applies with equal force to Hebrews x. 26–9, that a shorter treatment will be sufficient in the case of this text. The crucial passage here is the phrase: "the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified." If the word "sanctified" means here "made holy" in the full moral sense of that word it would argue powerfully in favour of the view which we find ourselves unable to accept. But the setting makes against that interpretation. The "blood of the covenant" is a favourite phrase of the writer and we get a glimpse of his meaning when we read in ix. 18 (R.V.): "Wherefore even the first covenant hath not been dedicated without blood." The individual who entered into fellowship with the worshippers of Christ our Lord was set apart by the blood of the new covenant. He had professed his allegiance to the Son of God and, outwardly at least, sought the blessings attached to the revelation of God's love manifested in Christ our Lord. Now he tramples on the Son of God and regards the blood as common, having no more significance than the blood of any malefactor, having less significance than the blood of bulls and of goats that signified entrance into the old covenant. All accompanying manifestations which were present to him are now ignored. He offers an outrage to the Spirit of grace.

All this suggests that there is an outward setting apart as well as an inward, and both are related to the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. That this is the meaning of the passage seems clear from the qualifying words that conclude the tenth chapter: "But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul" (R.V.). Here also it is difficult to give the exact meaning. Perhaps it might be rendered: "But we are not of the shrinking-back ones with perdition in view, but of the faith ones with the gaining of the soul in view." The oblique reference to our Lord's words "he that loseth his life shall find it" will not escape notice. In each case the warning is qualified with reference to those who keep the

assurance of hope steadfast unto the end. In each case the evidence given for a lasting Christian experience is that fruit has been borne to the glory of God.

Two Dangerous Trends

We need to lay emphasis on this factor in our modern life. If we read the signs aright, there have been two movements inimical to the gospel. There has been an undue exaltation of man's unaided powers. The theory of an immanent Deity welling up in the spirit of all men, but most fully expressed in those who have inherited the gospel message, has led to undue confidence in what may be called the development of modern civilization. The supernatural is not indeed denied, but it is made so perfectly one with the natural that it follows, as a consequence, that all man wants is a release of the divinity contained within. This release, it is maintained, will be achieved by the ordinary methods of education. It is not suggested that the great messages of the prophets, and particularly the message of Jesus Christ our Lord, should be ignored or depreciated. That would be supremely foolish, since these must ever act as powerful levers, lifting from the soul the dead weight of false tradition that keeps it down. But, it is contended, there are prophets today who interpret in a living manner the messages of those ancient authors.

This is the message of Liberalism. Some say it is dead or dying. But it has left its mark, and we may expect it to revive in some strange guise because it is the message of the human heart. It has some noble features which we do well to recognize. But it takes sin too lightly. It fails to plumb the depths of human failure. To all such messengers of a false hope we need to say: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." It is strange how strong is the resistance to this message, even after the failure of Liberalism is confessed so widely. St. Paul must have sensed the same reluctance to accept this truth when he wrote: "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14). There will always be the collision between the physical and the spiritual until God the Holy Ghost finds entrance into our inmost being.

The second enemy to true spiritual progress is found in the movement which demands response to the ideal on the part of man as man. The Roman Catholic theology as developed by the Jesuits gave importance to the will of man. The Jesuits were not Pelagians. They recognized that man could not keep the path of virtue by his own power, nor return to it when he had lost it. But they held jealously to the idea that the faint strivings of resolve must co-operate with the offered grace of God. Very many of the theories of discipline that have

reached far beyond the borders of the direct influence of the Jesuits have grown from this conception.

Henry Hammond was far indeed from accepting much that found favour with the followers of Ignatius Loyola, yet his doctrine of "evangelical obedience" had at its heart this idea of an enfeebled will allying itself with the mighty power of God. And in modern evangelical circles the same idea is not wholly absent.

It is difficult to avoid being misunderstood when trying to formulate the warning which seems to be necessary here. The danger of exaggeration on one side or the other is very great. Yet it must be said that sometimes in preaching the hearer is exhorted to yield in a manner which suggests that the whole burden of the message resides in the appeal to the will. The objective message of the gospel suddenly becomes wholly subjective. The hearer is led to believe: "It is what I do that saves me; Christ my Lord died, but His death remains inoperative until I say Yes."

That there is a great truth here makes the danger all the more pressing. An immediate volitional reaction is regarded as the supreme end. Every effort is made to stir the emotions, and, as a result, responses are secured. Many of them, thank God, are wrought by the Spirit; but sometimes a man is thrown back on himself instead of on Christ, and the result is very dangerous. We must remember that there is an inward work of the Spirit without which any movement of the mind will still be a movement of the natural man. Why are the earnest warnings of the New Testament given? Why are we so constantly counselled to rest in nothing for assurance of salvation but fruit unto holiness?

Our earlier discussion on the relation of the natural and supernatural in the new birth[1] may help us to understand the reason. The movement born of God in the soul issues in a perfectly natural response of the will. The fact that the will has been renewed is not directly present in consciousness. What is present is a new sense of sinfulness and a new appreciation of the atoning work of the Son of God. There is a decision which is comparable to the ordinary working of the mind of man. He turns from his sinful state and is conscious of his pitiful need in just the same way as any man who has a new vision loathes the past and desires a different future. But the new decision of the renewed will is instinct with God. "All things are of God."

Through the deceitfulness of sin many things present themselves to the natural man as things of God. For example, he fancies that if he enters on a course of strict discipline he will find God, or that if he recognizes his desire to serve his fellowmen he will find God. When stirred by the moving story of the Son of God who bled and died, he may bow his head in sorrow on account of it and imagine that he

[1] See p. 35.

has found God. All these things are not wrong. All of them in their own place are right. But the unrenewed nature makes gods after its own image, even out of *right things,* and worships them. Slowly the imperative commands of God are lowered to meet the baser conceptions of unregenerate man. His self-discipline, while helpful up to a point, leads him to become immersed in social-welfare schemes and gradually to lose all sense of the eternal. God becomes to him a vast social welfare agency. No "pie in the sky when you die" for him. Here and now he will struggle to lift lame dogs over stiles. But there is a steady atrophying of the spiritual powers. And, by a strange consequence, there is a weakening of the sense of responsibility. "The greatest happiness of the greatest number" is a magnificent ideal. But when the spiritual good of the greatest number is left out, or too closely equated with material prosperity, utilitarianism rapidly degenerates into a greedy grabbing of anything that can be safely salvaged from the wreckage of a disintegrating social state.

It is not otherwise with the human stirring of emotions in relation to the sacrifice of the Son of God. If the good seed sown in utilitarianism is choked by the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches the enthusiasm of a passing emotion withers because it has no depth of earth. To all of these it must be said, as to the Galatians of old: "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" (Gal. v. 7). It is for these reasons that we hold it truer to the scriptural idea to emphasize that we do not receive the new birth when we believe, but that we truly believe because we have been born from above. "But as many as received him . . . were born . . . of God" (John i. 12, 13).

This revolution of nature lies below consciousness. It displays itself in repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. But here again, just because the emergence into consciousness sets all man's powers naturally into operation, we need to remind ourselves that there can be a repentance of lower character, a change of mind from bad to good, which falls short of the deep-seated change wrought by the living Spirit of God. And there may be faith, even faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, which, although excellent in itself, yet falls short of that abiding attitude of trust which characterizes those who have been quickened by the Spirit. "Many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man" (John ii. 23–5).

John Bunyan had a deep sense of these things: "I turned my head to look back, and saw Ignorance come up to the river side. But he soon got over, and that without half the difficulty which the other two men met with. For it happened that there was then in that place one, Vain-

hope, a ferryman, that with his boat helped him over; so he, as the others I saw, did ascend the hill to come up to the gate; only he came alone; neither did any meet him with the least encouragement. . . . Then I saw that there was a way to hell, even from the gates of heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction."

It is because of these things, so difficult to make fully intelligible, yet so potent for evil in the lives of many, that we find the New Testament so strongly insistent on the need of fruit in our lives, if we are to cherish a true assurance of spiritual renovation. The life of discipline will then truly be ours. We shall bring our body into subjection, but we shall not dream of drawing satisfaction from the need for watchfulness. Rather will we groan within ourselves waiting for the redemption of the body. We shall be foremost in seeking the welfare of our fellowmen. We shall not be weary in well-doing, knowing that in due season we shall reap if we faint not. But we shall find no satisfaction in our activities unless they help us to lead guilty sinners to the place of pardon. Our efforts will be practical, but will be directed to the end of persuading men to seek the Lord, and removing as far as possible all hindrances to the soul's vision of Him. We, too, shall bow our heads in moments of deep emotion at the thought of the agony of the Son of God, but we shall remember that a living faith worketh always by love, and shall not expend our energies on remorseful recollection but in abiding trust. Assurance will grow as we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, just because we know that God is working in us both to will and to do of His own good pleasure. We close this aspect of an inexhaustible subject with some words of Dr. Moule:

"The process is mysterious. The man receives a divine power upon him, within him. He is alive unto God, knowing Him, loving Him, lovingly bent upon pleasing Him 'as his own son that serveth him' (Mal. iii. 17); and he knows that he did not originate for himself this condition, he did not beget and bear himself again to living hope, to loving life. Perhaps he knows definitely when, in some day or hour of mercy, he was awakened, convinced, enlightened, enabled to give himself to God. But this is but part of the secret, one mighty symptom of the process. He does not know when and how the holy work really began, how long the Spirit, who brought him to the new birth at last, who was, in Hooker's words, 'thus effectual in the secret work of regeneration unto newness of life', had been preparing for that bright hour by secret leadings, by unnoticed providences, by every slighted means of grace—slighted, yet leaving *some* mark on thought and will. He may know when the wind manifestly swayed him; he does not know whence and how it came in its holy path. And truly he knows not whither it goeth; 'it doth not yet appear what he shall be' (1 John iii. 2)" (*Veni Creator*, p. 76).

CHAPTER IV

JUSTIFICATION

Closely related to regeneration, the New Testament teaching of justification is all-important. We step here into the region of the conscious thought of the individual. Some, as we have pointed out, regard justification as the completion of regeneration. When we are awakened to faith and lay hold on the Son of God, we are justified and given a new nature. If we are to take regeneration in its wider sense, even that would not give us a complete picture of God's dealings. The regenerate soul is not only justified but fully sanctified and received up into glory. "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified" (Rom. viii. 30). It has frequently been pointed out that the tenses are the same throughout. There is no past emerging gradually into the present and on into the future. At the point in the divine line of progress, to which attention is directed, the predestinate take their place with the glorified. This is indeed "the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory" (Matt. xix. 28). We believe that the language of the Church of England Baptismal Service, "Seeing now, dearly beloved, that this child is regenerate", looks in that direction also, as is shown by the fullness of blessing associated with baptism in the accompanying exhortation: "Doubt ye not therefore but earnestly believe . . . that He will embrace him with the arms of His mercy: that He will give unto him the blessing of eternal life, and make him partaker of His everlasting kingdom."

This is not an eccentricity of one section of Reformed Christendom, as is commonly believed. Kuyper draws attention to the question asked of parents in the Dutch Reformed Church: "Do you believe that your children are sanctified?" It is consonant with the language of the Epistle to the Romans, which assures us that baptism is not only a burial into the death of Christ but a guarantee of union with His resurrection, that we should walk in newness of life. This aspect of divine truth must not be overlooked.

Justification the Result of Faith

But taking regeneration in the narrower sense of a quickening to new life, we prefer to regard justification as the result of awakened faith. It is the act of God in response to the act of the soul which rests on Him in confiding trust. Regeneration is the awakening to the

call of God and issues in a response to that call, and so we read: "Whom he called, them he also justified." The ideas of regeneration and justification are separable in thought, though the latter is an essential consequent of the former. What is meant by justification?

The Scriptural Data

Here also it is important to collect the scriptural data. The verb is clearly related to the substantive that speaks of vengeance, punishment. Sodom and Gomorrah "are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7). "Who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might" (2 Thess. i. 9, R.V.). There is a compound form of the substantive in Acts xxv. 15 (R.V.), translated "sentence": "Asking for sentence against him." Punishment is here represented as a payment to justice. This atmosphere of requital or, in the contrary direction, full acquittal is carried over into the verb "to justify". "Wisdom is justified of all her children" must mean that wisdom challenges all men to find a flaw in her righteous proceeding. "The publicans justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John" (Luke vii. 29) can only mean that the people and the publicans asserted that God had openly vindicated His holy character in the life and work of John the Baptist. "By thy words thou shalt be justified" (Matt. xii. 37) can only mean thy words are such as to establish thy righteousness.

The LXX Usage

This usage has passed over from the LXX. "I will not justify the wicked" (Exod. xxiii. 7) can only mean: "I will not suffer the wicked to be regarded as just." "They shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked" (Deut. xxv. 1) is a demand for fair dealing in matters of controversy. It can only mean that the judges shall make declarations according to the facts before them, and show no partiality in their decisions. And so we have the proverb: "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord" (Prov. xvii. 15). The language is the language of the forum throughout. We are moving in the region of law and justice; we are considering the actions of men as they must appear in the moral sphere. So much is generally conceded. The Latin word "justificare" has the same moral flavour about it. Indeed, we can go further and assert that it is redolent of the law courts.

Legal and Moral

Here we digress for a moment to offer a word of warning against the too frequent employment of such phrases as: "It may be legal, but it is not moral." We are being hurried into a mental condition in which human law is made an object of contempt. The ethical or

the Christian frame of mind is supposed to be unalterably opposed to the legal frame of mind. The sound apostolic precept, "the law is not made for a righteous man" (1 Tim. i. 9), has been perverted as though it meant "a righteous man should have no regard for law". Vials of wrath are poured on "legalistic ideas" of God, of salvation, of human responsibility. We hope to deal later with a special application of this view, but at present it may be well to point out that the moral effect of this continued depreciation of law is very bad. The idea is being fostered, which is given support by many modern philosophers, that law is a human convention that has little to commend it. It is contended that law, as an instrument for checking hasty revolt against an imperfect but, at the same time, the only attainable method of social interaction, may have its place. But it is destined to pass away when the ideal conditions are secured through man's developing consciousness. As it exists, whatever its value as far as making social life possible, it is an instrument of the possessors and is shot through with greed and the lust for power. Many who adopt the type of expression to which we allude would indignantly repudiate any sympathy with such an attitude to our present legal standards. They would reply to any such criticism that they are not seeking to displace law but are endeavouring to transcend it by the higher principle of love. Surely, they would argue, this is no perversion of the text: "The law is not made for a righteous man." Does it not mean exactly that for which we contend? The righteous man does not govern himself by codes and textbooks. He is no Shylock demanding his pound of flesh. He is impatient, further, of the modern legal criticism of Portia, which points out that legally Shylock was entitled to his pound of flesh with all the inevitable concomitants thereof which would include the blood. There can be no doubt that human law demands recognition, but the Christian is justified in demanding its transcendence. Strict justice has at times to yield to mercy.

Value of Revolt Against Legalism

Up to that point, we may concede that there is a valuable element in the revolt against what has been called legalism. But the need for mercy is only another way of saying that our clumsy legal procedure is unable to take account of all the factors in any individual case. If we were omniscient, able to read all hearts and to weigh exactly all contingencies, then justice and mercy would coincide. Such words as "inadvertence" and "extenuating circumstances" would disappear, and each act would stand in its independence clearly separated from every other act and quite definitely related to every other in the scheme of the whole. The legal would become the simply moral, and the righteous man would respond at once. To him it would not be an outward code demanding observance but an inner urge to complete his

being in holy inter-action with others. Where our present legal code falls short of this ideal, two courses are open.

Remedying Defects of Law

In so far as we can we should remedy the defects in law. An example may be found in the increasing rigidity of company law. It is no longer possible for a man to give his name to a company as director without having a monetary interest in the company of sufficient importance to cause him to share substantially in any loss that may accrue through trading failure. Long before the law stepped in with such a demand, righteous men recognized the moral obligation and refused to lend their names where they had no financial interest.

Transcending the Letter of the Law

The second course which is always necessary, owing to the weakness of our knowledge and power, is to recognize the necessity to do more than the exact letter of the law requires, where that presents itself as an obligation, and, on the other side, to be ready to remit so much of our just due as will contribute to the greatest happiness of our fellows. But we can neither improve law nor forgo a just demand without honouring it. It is only the man who does justice who can really love mercy. A man cannot forgo a right which is not there, nor can he improve that which is essentially evil. We must therefore find a place for law in the very heart of God. What we find there, however, is not capable of any further improvement and presents itself as an absolute right which cannot be forgone.

Relation of Justification to Righteousness

To return to our examination of the New Testament evidence. It is conceded that the words "justify", "justice" and "justification" have a relation to the righteous decree of God. But opinion has sharply divided as to the nature of that relation. It is contended with a good show of reason that while "to justify" means to declare righteous, that does not exclude the related idea "to make righteous". Dean Liddon was one of the last of the English expositors who held that the word "justify" meant "to make righteous". But many modern commentators would assert, if we may so put it, that the verb is neutral. It teaches that a man is declared righteous before the tribunal of God, but it leaves untouched the question whether this declaration is an assertion of inherent holiness or a recognition of the merits of another through whom the individual is freed from the demand of law.

As is well known, the Roman Catholic Church, in its official "Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent", takes a very definite stand here. It declares that the sinner who has received the infusion of grace, to which we already referred—the three virtues of faith, hope and

charity—is not only regarded as just, but actually is just in the sight of God. God accounts the sinner righteous because he really is righteous. The life of Christ is communicated to him, and so long as that life works in him he is a just man.

There is an amusing example of the manner in which exegesis is made the servant of preconceived theology in the comment supplied in Roman Catholic catechisms on the question of so-called venial sin. The idea is that sins can be divided into classes—venial sins, which, while they rob the soul of lustre, do not destroy its life, which is the life of Christ; and mortal sins, which break the bond of charity between man and man or God and man, and thus deprive the soul of life. In attempting to supply scriptural evidence for this distinction in the lethal power of sins, the Catechism to which we refer quotes the text, "The just man falleth seven times" (Prov. xxiv. 16), to which the comment is added "not mortally, for then he would be no longer just", which, if pressed logically, would mean that a just man could not sin mortally, even once, for he would be no longer just.

An Unexpected Tribute to Imputation

It is interesting to notice that the Roman Catholic Church, notwithstanding her strong language regarding justification, pays tribute in two different respects to the idea of some form of imputation. One aspect, strange to say, is found in the theory of indulgences, which awakened hostility in the days of the Reformation. The other and more important aspect is found in her teaching on the sacrament of baptism. It is well for us to remember that this element is strongly present in the Roman Catholic presentation of the theory of justification, lest we find ourselves bearing, unconsciously, false witness. We are not saved by works, according to Aquinas and the Council of Trent. That is a Protestant misconception, due to the promises which are given to the development of the life of the soul in Roman Catholic books of devotion, which lay emphasis on the works of satisfaction, which must be wrought by the Christian after baptism. But the new life communicated to the soul in baptism is not earned. It is the direct application of the merits of Christ. By the merits of Christ the sinner is made just, and not by his own works. We have, of course, to acknowledge that there is an act of will on the part of the sinner co-operating with divine grace.

And in the theory of indulgences we seem to be carried further on the road to the imputation of non-personal merit. Not only are the merits of Christ applied, giving new life to the soul, but there are superabundant merits of Christ and of the saints, which make up for the deficiencies in our later satisfactions.

The Reformers rightly regarded this doctrine of "pardons" as particularly obnoxious. Dr. Blakeney, in his *Protestant Catechism,*

declared: "The two notions on which it is founded—that of temporal punishment after death, and of supererogation (that is, works done over and above those commanded by God)—are opposed to Scripture. The foundation being removed, the superstructure falls. It is most dishonouring to Christ, for while He has done everything for us, it declares that in part we can save ourselves" (p. 43). All this is true. Yet it is none the less remarkable that in this very late perversion there is, shall we say, an unconscious tribute paid to the principle of the transference of merit without the creation in the recipient of any of the merit transferred. It is true that indulgences were bought. The Council of Trent is sufficient witness to that fact. It is also true that modern regulations provide for acquiring them by "fasting, prayer and alms deeds", by pilgrimages, visits to churches, etc. But the essence of the idea is that what we were unable to do our Lord and the saints have more than done, so that their superabundance ministers to our lack.

There is a witness to vicariousness, even in the doctrine which the Church of England rightly denounces as "a fond thing, vainly invented, grounded on no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God". The fact bears eloquent testimony to the ineradicable nature of a doctrine which is now so confidently discarded by many.

Several Lines of Thought

There are here several distinct lines of thought which it is not easy to keep separate. The Pelagian conception is that we attain justification by imitating the life of our Lord, just as we fall into sin by imitating the example of Adam. No serious body of religious thought accepts that view completely. Perhaps the nearest approach to it is to be found in the writings of Bradley and Green and similar idealists. Writers of this school of thought maintain that there is a true element in the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith. Green particularly has devoted special attention to this aspect of the question. According to his interpretation, already we recognize our high calling, we identify ourselves with the Eternal Good and find in that identification our true selves. As we work out painfully in experience this great ideal we find hostile forces operating against us. We cling tenaciously to our ideal; we *are* what we desire to be and it is an alien spirit that would make us other. The righteousness we ardently desire is ours even while we are conscious that its development lies still in the future. No doubt modern theologians have been affected by this form of presentation, but in so far as it lays aside any reference to the atoning work of our Lord and depends on an inherent ideal, welling up in us from the fount of Eternal Consciousness, it must be classed as a modern form of Pelagianism. The only merit it knows is the merit of an achieved ideal.

The Modernist Concept

Then there is the Modernist appropriation of this opinion of the idealists. The newer school of theologians, who would claim to be Modernists, would assert that the notion of identification with the high ideals of our nature is indeed the essential element in justification. But they would further assert that this ideal took shape and was realized in the Person of Jesus Christ our Lord. His life can be communicated to us. As we identify ourselves in spirit and purpose with Him the ideal becomes actual. We are justified by faith and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. We are accounted righteous because we are ideally united with Christ our Lord in purpose and conception. There is no suggestion of any penal satisfaction. The sacrifice of Christ was His struggle with sin and unbelief, a struggle in which we are called upon to share. There is much beautiful literature associated with this presentation, and it fascinates many. Regretfully, we have to say that it transforms Christ into an ideal Example and adds little except the historic content of His great life to the conceptions of the idealists. It leaves His death as an exhibition of fearless endurance to the end. Beyond that it seems to have little if any significance.

The Roman View

When we step from that position to the one adopted by the Roman Catholic Church we are conscious that there is a serious effort to appreciate the historic significance of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is represented not only as an Ideal, but as a Saviour who interposed His sacred Person between us and the just wrath of God. As sons of the Reformation, we cannot but be sensible of the grave deficiencies in the Roman Catholic doctrine concerning the appropriation of the sacrifice of Christ. But we must not allow that fact to blind us to the valuable testimony to the objective character of our Lord's atoning work in the tradition embodied in the Roman Church. The fact that the radical differences which separate us do not reach to the vital fact of a vicarious atonement is another confirmation of the firm hold that great truth had not only on the early followers of our Lord but on their successors through many generations. But we are not able, therefore, to ignore the differences. The Roman Church maintains that the result of our Lord's atoning sacrifice is to secure a new life in the soul so that by the new life we find ourselves possessed of justice. We are restored to favour with God because we are restored to purity. We are declared just because we are just. God looks on us with favour because we possess faith, hope and charity. It is usual to say that in the Roman theology, we are justified on account of imparted righteousness. In the Reformed Theology, we are justified on account of an imputed righteousness. In

both, as has been said, we are justified only by the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Objection on Ground of Fact

The first objection which presents itself, when considering the Roman Catholic view, is that it states what is not really a fact. We are not really and completely righteous. In the first place, we have not made any reparation for the sins committed previous to our justification. This aspect is most fully brought out if we consider the position of a truly converted adult who is baptized very shortly before death. He has the evangelical virtues of faith, hope and charity, and he goes straight to heaven in virtue of his baptism. But how can a present, brief spotlessness satisfy for the sins of a lifetime? Unless justification includes pardon for past sins it is not worthy of the name. But if it includes pardon for past sins, then something more is involved than the present spotlessness of soul. Justification is not mere pardon but includes pardon, and on that account must be different from the possession of imparted righteousness. The earlier writers down to the fifth century were sensible of this fact and, even when they laid stress on the impartation of a new life, did not hesitate to speak of baptism as giving justification in the sense of uniting us to the atoning sacrifice of Christ our Lord. Fulgentius is insistent that we eat the flesh of the Son of God and drink His blood in baptism no less than in holy communion. Remission of sins is the promise given to the multitude by St. Peter on the Day of Pentecost, and the message of Ananias to Paul is: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts xxii. 16). It is not possible to eliminate these features in any true doctrine of justification, and therefore we hold that the Roman doctrine of imparted righteousness is defective.

Objection on Ground of Merit

In the next place we have to observe that righteousness, if it is to satisfy the demands of God, must be perfect. But it is admitted that the imparted righteousness which, it is asserted, is given by baptism cannot be perfect. The Roman Church, indeed, maintains that in some few instances there has been found not only perfect righteousness, but, as we saw above, a superabundant merit. But the cases are admittedly rare. By some curious freak they seem to abound more in the early days of Christianity. Pope after pope has the mystic letter "S" prefixed to his name in the earlier period. It was then the exception to have a pope that is not a saint. Now it is the exception to have a pope that is. But, leaving aside all these questions, as perhaps too curious even for the theologically minded, we have to admit that many a man is "in a state of grace", and therefore just before God, who is

far from perfect. Are we therefore to assume that God has lowered His standards and regarded those as just who, on a more strict reckoning, would not stand the test? We can hardly take this position. It would be easy to show that the consequences of a theory which invited such a conclusion have been to lower greatly the sense of sin and to postulate a standard of acceptance that is more accommodating than elevating. Indeed, we must not lose sight of the fact that the theory of imparted righteousness as propounded by the Laudian divine, Henry Hammond, made actual provision for this lowering of the divine standard. "Evangelical obedience" was the best that could be offered by frail man; something lower than the perfect righteousness required by God, but accepted by Him because of the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. It seems inevitable that there must be some depreciation of this kind, if we are to contend that we are accounted righteous before God because of some inherent capacity in our own souls, even if we concede that it must be supernaturally communicated.

Yet again we find the same inconsistency in the Roman theory when we come to consider the restoration of the penitent who sins mortally after baptism. When mortal sin is committed, justification is lost. The sinner returns to the condition that was his before baptism. And yet there is a difference. He cannot now return to God by the same door. The laver of baptism cannot be employed the second time. He must seek "the second plank after shipwreck", the sacrament of penance. He must confess all his sins to the priest, together with the circumstances that change the species of sin; then he receives absolution. The eternal punishment, due to his mortal sin, is removed. He is once more in a state of grace through the merit of our Lord, communicated this time through the sacrament of penance. But the relics of sin remain and the sinner has to make satisfaction by enduring a temporal punishment for the sins he has committed. Finally extreme unction remits venial sin and removes the stain of any sin remaining. So that a state of grace is not a state of perfection; the penitent is subject to the imposition of punishment even though he has experienced the implantation of a new life. Indeed, the satisfaction which has to be made for sin, forgiven as to the eternal punishment, continues after death and is only finally completed in Purgatory. The Roman doctrine does not present justification as simply a condition in which righteousness is imparted. It allows, also, for an element of forgiveness, which, when rightly understood, compels belief in the application not only of the life of Christ but of the sacrificial merits of His death. And all this is independent of the problems already discussed as to the relation of the sacrament of baptism to the actual, as distinct from the symbolical or ceremonial, regeneration of the accepted sinner. It would be a strange thing if any related theory stood up better under analysis than the theory of the Church

of Rome. Her innate conservatism has caused her to retain in her tradition many elements of the historic faith, and, as a consequence, even in her defective presentation we are able to discern many features of the ancient gospel message. It is the very inconsistencies that point the way.

A Substitute for the Roman and Reformed View

But there is a strange confidence in some quarters that such inconsistencies can be overcome without recourse to the doctrine of imputed righteousness. Thus Dr. Simon writes: "Neither the Roman Catholic and other present-day kindred doctrines which represent justification as in some sense imparting *real* righteousness; nor the traditional or 'orthodox' doctrine of an imputation of the righteousness of Christ, are true to Scripture, though each of them embodies a certain aspect of the truth" (Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible,* art. "Justification"). It seems a pity Dr. Simon allowed such an important statement to lie there without any further explanation. We should naturally wish to ask what are the aspects of truth which each embodies. Dr. Simon does not make the matter very clear in his article. He starts with a searching analysis of the meaning of the word "to justify". He traces it through the classical Greek literature, the LXX and the New Testament and reaches the conclusion that the word never means to make righteous. He uses the well-known grammatical argument, that "verbs in οō", derived from adjectives of *moral* meaning, never have this efficient signification. The only neutral colour he will allow to impose itself on our description for a moment is that the person may be inherently just and be so declared, or may secure a rectification of a wrong position and so be declared righteous. So far, then, linguistically, Dr. Simon comes down strongly on the side of the Reformed as against the Roman Catholic position, which he later describes as "some imparting of *real* righteousness".

A Confusing Alternative

But when we come to the presentation which supplants the Roman and the Reformed doctrine and is claimed to be true to Scripture we are frankly confused. Dr. Simon maintains that justification changes a relation more or less abnormal into one that is normal. Justification is the establishment of normal personal relations between God and man. But man cannot vindicate his position and repel the assaults of an accusing conscience. Neither can he make adequate amends for the wrong that he has done to God. Yet justification is recognized both as possible and as a fact. How can justification be posited in such doleful conditions? Dr. Simon meets the difficulty by distinguishing between *implicit* and *explicit* justification, and suggesting that between them there are or may be *stages* which are not subjected to

the limits of earth and time. He draws a verbal graph of three concentric circles. The outermost circle stands for the Gentiles; the next circle represents Judaism; and the inner circle, the believer in the revealed Son of God. The Gentile had no proper sense of sin; he lacked also a sense of forgiveness and, much more, of justification. The Israelite had a deeper sense of sin and consequently a graver danger of despair. If, however, he behaved as one that belonged to the covenant; if he loyally recognized the law and used the appointed means of atonement, he was in a relationship to God. He was justified at the Israelitish stage which was higher than the Gentile stage, but had yet to reach its culmination in Christ. Law, revealed in life and suffering and in sacrifice both by and to God, was thus presented in its supreme form. Opportunity was given to respond with a loyal assent to *right, trustful surrender* to love, and, finally, *belief* that realizes the invisible. This is indeed final justification. The Christian believer is related rightly to God. This is the true biblical substitute alike for Roman and Reformed theories, according to Dr. Simon.

Dr. Simon and Paul

The first thing that strikes an impartial commentator is that Paul certainly knows nothing of Dr. Simon's concentric circles. He tells us quite explicitly that Abraham was justified by faith and that David describes the blessedness of those to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Nor has he any consciousness, apparently, of the elaborate scheme in which *law* takes its highest station in Christ Jesus our Lord and combines with assent to right trustful surrender and belief that realizes the invisible. If indeed Paul has any such conception, we can only say that he has completely hidden it. So far from suggesting that, by mounting periods, law at length in its supremest manifestation becomes an essential factor in the justification of the ungodly, Paul insists on the fact that by the law there can only come the knowledge of sin. The righteousness which is associated with justification is a righteousness apart from the law, even though it has witness borne to it by the law and the prophets. It is very strange that the great word "propitiation", which is foremost in Pauline thought, finds only a bare mention in this article, when we are told that "if justice be done to New Testament hints on the subject, propitiation, justification and sanctification will be found to constitute the distinguishable, though inseparable factors, of one great spiritual whole". Neither the article on the atonement nor that on propitiation comes from the pen of Dr. Simon. We think there is a defect in his article in that no reasoned expansion of the objection to imputed righteousness, nor yet any real explanation of the ideas of propitiation or atonement, have been supplied to the inquiring student.

The Roman Catholic Answer

There is too great a tendency in modern writers to dismiss time-honoured conceptions in a few well-chosen words. The Roman Catholic might readily reply to Dr. Simon: "You assert that it is not true to Scripture to represent justification as in some sense imparting real righteousness. But is there not in each of your concentric circles, in some sense, a real righteousness? Apart from the classical passage in St. James, which is a standby in our theory, even the Gentile on your theory 'held on firmly to a thread of life'. With an impoverished sense of sin, he yet recognized, through the influence of the God he knew, and through the much fuller operation of the God he followed afar off, that a certain course of conduct was right, and he did the right. Is not that the very essence of righteousness, even though as yet it is inchoate? The area of operation is limited, through the poor vision of the worker, but within the visible area he establishes right relations with God. And, passing the deepening sense of sin and the hope of pardon generated by the message to Israel, when we reach the inner circle and find a loyal assent to right, a trustful surrender to love and a belief that realizes the invisible, is it not mere word-splitting to deny to such a condition the character of real righteousness?" So far as we can see there is no answer to these questions. The right relation is induced by man's inner response to the demands of true morality, and the place of Christ in the system so far as it has been developed is the place of a revealer or teacher, not that of a Saviour.

The Valuable Element in Dr. Simon's Presentation

And yet it would be strange if such a careful student of the import of Greek phraseology should fail utterly in presenting the message of the gospel. We are deprived of the knowledge of the exact place he gives to propitiation, and hence cannot speak on that aspect. But there is an important consideration that emerges out of the theory of concentric circles. The thing that is developed, we would suggest, is not justification, but the inner content of the human response in faith. And we prefer the term "undeveloped" in this relation to the term "implicit". "Implicit" has a suggestion of something which has not arisen in consciousness or, at least, has not attained to full conscious expression. The faith which we have in view is a fully conscious faith. But it lacks the deeper content of the perfectly revealed gospel message. Surely this is what the writer to the Hebrews had in mind when he wrote that the fathers "all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things make it manifest that they are seeking

after a country of their own" (Heb. xi. 13, 14, R.V.). But when we come to think of justification, this development no longer displays itself. Justification is indeed a right relation to God, and that relation can be, and is, secured by faith, whether developed or undeveloped, so long as it has the character demanded by God.

The older theologians insisted that faith contained three elements: knowledge, assent and trust. Where the imperfect knowledge leads to assent and trust, there the proper relation with God is established. It is not that the justification is implicit, but the knowledge of the justified is as yet undeveloped. There is, moreover, the factor of justifying one's actions to oneself to which Dr. Simon makes reference. The inner harmony of the soul must be maintained. St. Paul certainly meant this when he wrote: "For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified" (1 Cor. iv. 4). There was no inner accusing voice, no conflict of purpose. We can reverently say that the New Testament exhibits the same sense of inner harmony in the nature of God. He must not only be the justifier; he must also be just. Indeed, this is the dominant thought in the Epistle to the Romans. God hath set forth His Son as a propitiation, "to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins done aforetime in the forbearance of God".

The Righteousness of God

The righteousness revealed is a righteousness of God. It is apprehended by means of faith, and its purpose is the remission of sins. It is not necessary to enter into the controversy here as to what "a righteousness of God" means; it appears to be quite possible to read two senses into the phrase. The righteousness is at once, from God's side, a declaration of the inner harmony of His being, and, from man's side, a righteousness which God provides, through the satisfaction of His Son. The link between the two meanings is found in the word "reckon". Abraham believed God and consequently righteousness could be attributed to him. He could stand as righteous in the sight of God. But when God forgave the sin of Abraham, without an adequate sacrificial provision, He did so by virtue of the coming sacrifice of Christ our Lord. Hence, when in the fullness of time the Saviour appeared, God showed clearly the righteousness of His action in pardoning the sins that appeared to cry for judgment. There is something very profound in the apostle's thought, which helps us to equate a righteousness provided by God with the other concept of an inner justice, in which all the divine attributes are harmonized. For us there is the glorious provision. But there could be no such provision were it not that God found a means of reconciling His justice and His mercy, honouring His law and ransoming the sinner.

CHAPTER V

IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS

When we recognize the vast reach of the Pauline argument, outlined in the previous chapter, we are thrown back inevitably on the traditional doctrine of imputed righteousness. Imputed righteousness cannot be considered in isolation from the great facts of the solidarity of the human race and the related truth of man's origin through the creative work of God. But we need not travel quite so far in this investigation. Unless there can be in some way a transference of responsibility between one individual and another, all hope of forgiveness must be abandoned. In such circumstances every son of man would stand before God as solely answerable for his own conduct. Forgiveness would involve the abrogation of law, and that, in turn, would lead to anarchy. We forgive because we recognize our need of forgiveness, and also the inadequacy of our demands in the light of clear justice. But, as a testimony to the inviolability of law rightly conceived and exercised, we demand frequently some reparation as a condition of forgiveness. And, further, in certain circumstances we cannot forgive. The judge cannot justify the wicked in order to secure personal gain to himself or even if he secures no gain whatever. Human forgiveness falls short of justification and human forgiveness does not embody the full ethical completeness that we desire, simply because we cannot attain to it. These considerations demand more attention than is sometimes given to them.

Reponsibility Transferable

But at the heart of the principle of forgiveness there lies the possibility of a transference of responsibility, in some measure, as between man and man. It would be impossible to organize men into a society if some such transference were not recognized. An agent at once accepts a measure of responsibility and, at the same time, disclaims full responsibility, for acts which are his and yet which he performs as an agent. Employers' liability, Third Party risks, calls on shares, diplomatic negotiations, the smallest and the greatest things in life, are shot through with this relation. It is only a theological prejudice that separates the New Testament doctrine of imputed righteousness altogether from such relations and gives it a foreign appearance.

Imputed Righteousness Denied

But before we proceed any further in offering a defence of the doctrine, it may be well to answer the question: Is imputed righteousness

in the New Testament? Dr. Simon, as we have seen, would say: "No! There are important truths behind the opinion, but it is not true to Scripture." Unfortunately, we are left to conjecture as to what these truths may be. Very many Methodist expositors, and some amongst the Laudians, would support this attitude; and, strangely enough, some who represent the Brethren movement find themselves unable to reconcile the doctrine of imputed righteousness, or, to speak more strictly, the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, with the full burden of New Testament teaching. In face of this repudiation from such various quarters, we need to examine the evidence closely.

Evidence from the Greek

We are safe in saying that there is nothing in the Greek of the New Testament which compels us to reject the theory. Dr. Robertson rejects any inferences that might be drawn from the absence or presence of the article. He writes: "In Romans iii. 25 it is possible to take *εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ* 'for a showing of His righteousness', while in iii. 26 *πρὸς τὴν ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης θεοῦ* may refer to the previous mention of it, as a more definite conception. Compare also *τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην* (Rom. x. 3) and *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* (iii. 21), where, however, as in i. 17, the idea may be, probably is, 'a righteousness of God', not 'the righteousness of God'. In examples like this (cf. *θεοῦ υἱός* —Matt. xxvii. 54) only the context can decide. Sometimes the matter is wholly doubtful" (*A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p. 781). It is not easy to see what other conclusion can be drawn than that "phrases otherwise definite do not require the article". Yet some writers have insisted that the presence or absence of the article gives a very different sense. We believe that no consistent interpretation can be worked out on this principle, apart from any other guiding considerations. But there is a wealth of related passages, which place the meaning beyond dispute. Incidentally, we cannot regard Robertson's expression in explaining Romans i. 17: "the righteousness which God has and wishes to bestow on us" as wholly free from ambiguity (ibid. p. 499). It seems to treat righteousness as a detachable quality which can be disposed of at the owner's discretion. It seems better to regard the genitive as attributive—a righteousness which is God-like, or in accordance with the character of God. The righteousness which God has must be incommunicable. We are reminded of Job's sturdy protest: "God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me" (Job xxvii. 5). And yet to meet the need of the sinner the righteousness which is revealed must be of God. It must satisfy the scrutiny of the Lord, who is light and in whom there is no darkness at all. To suggest that man in his own integrity can offer such a righteousness to the scrutiny of God is to do violence to the whole message of Scripture.

How Can the Needed Righteousness be Provided?

Here we find a wealth of references that helps us very materially. Older divines spoke much of the active and passive righteousness of Christ. By active they meant what our Lord did. By passive what our Lord suffered. In His active righteousness, we can discern, as it were, two distinct elements. Our Lord was inherently righteous. He could say: "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (John viii. 46). The word is familiar in its Latin dress to students of formal logic. It means to offer proof by demonstration. It wavers in New Testament translation between "convince" and "rebuke", so that there need be no mistaking of its inner purport (see, for example, 1 Cor. xiv. 24; Titus i. 9, 13; Heb. xii. 5). Our Lord challenged His adversaries to bring evidence of wrongdoing against Him. The voice from heaven twice declared: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. iii. 17, xvii. 5), and the Son could say of Himself: "I do always those things that please him" (John viii. 29). And so the Lord is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. vii. 26). Our Lord's inherent righteousness at once presents us with a problem: How can the gulf between the sinless and the sinner be bridged? There is a hint, at least, of the answer in the second element in the active righteousness of Christ. Not only does He, in His personal actions, realize fully the law of God, but there are aspects of His obedience that are not directly related to His personal holiness. He was circumcised, brought into the covenant of God, of which He was, in union with the Father, both the Promoter and the Fulfiller. No doubt that was an unconscious submission of an infant of eight days old; but we cannot separate His divine purpose in electing to enter into human conditions from the inevitable consequences of that purpose. Our Lord did not enter the Roman or the Greek world. He made Himself one with the people of the old covenant. Surely we have to see in this submission to the seal of righteousness something more than personal conformity.

The Pauline Presentation

There is a profound conception lying behind the Pauline statement: "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name" (Rom. xv. 8, 9). St. Paul recognizes the representative character of our Lord's circumcision even more explicity in the Epistle to the Colossians, when he writes: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Col. ii. 11). Again, our Lord Jesus Christ submitted Himself to John's baptism.

John had certain scruples about receiving the Lord as a candidate. "I have need," he said, "to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" (Matt. iii. 14). Jesus answered: "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (verse 15).

The Baptism of John

In what sense could the sinless Son of God be baptized with the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins? Surely only in the sense that He represented His sinful people, for whom He came and whom He saves. In the active life of our Lord Jesus Christ there is manifest already that element of representation, which forms the New Testament basis for the doctrine of imputed righteousness.

The Passive Obedience of Christ

But when we come to what divines of an earlier date call the passive obedience of Christ, then the feature which is glanced at in His active obedience gathers a force and frequency that can no longer be neglected. We have the message of John the Baptist: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29). We have the Matthean interpretation of the healing miracles: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. viii. 17). This finds, at least, a partial explanation in Luke vi. 19: "there went virtue out of him, and healed them all." In Luke viii. 46 the Master said: "I perceive that virtue is gone out of me." There was a link between the sufferer and the Saviour that involved some transference of energy.

When we come to the actual passion of the Lord, the messages are still more definite. St. Peter tells us that our Lord "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust" (1 Pet. iii. 18). There are two significant indications of representation in this passage. It tells us that the suffering of Christ had concern with sins. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that suffering for sins must involve some association with the sinner. It cannot be partnership in crime; it must be some kind of partnership in the responsibilities or consequences which crime brings. But this is made more emphatic by the second qualification: "the just for the unjust." The usual interpretation would be "the just on behalf of the unjust"; but there is wisdom in Dr. Robertson's comment on the use of this preposition, when he says: "It is sometimes said that *ἀντί* means literally 'instead' and *ὑπέρ* 'in behalf of'. But Winer sees more clearly when he says: 'In most cases, one who acts in behalf of another takes his place.' Whether he does or not depends on the nature of the action, not on *ἀντί* or *ὑπέρ*. . . . Paul's combination in 1 Timothy ii. 6 is worth noting, *ἀντίλυτρον ὑπέρ πάντων*, where the notion of substitution is manifest. There are a few other passages

where *ὑπέρ* has the resultant notion of 'instead' and only violence to the context can get rid of it. . . . In Philemon 13 *ὑπέρ σοῦ μοι διακονῇ*, the more obvious notion, is 'instead'" (*A Grammar of the Greek New Testament,* p. 630–1).

An Objection

Sometimes by way of a general answer to discussions of this kind it is said: "Our faith does not rest in Greek prepositions." This is a foolish way of talking. We are under obligation to discover the meaning of any message that comes to us. There is a difference between "for" and "against", and if a person assures us that he is "for" us we would be very foolish to ask him to deliver us from reposing trust in a preposition. He might reply: "If you are not on good terms with me you will find me against you." Prepositions again. Dr. Denny once wrote: "It is a sentence that leaves meaning on the mind, not the different words into which it can be broken up." If it be true, as Robertson asserts, that "The analytic tendency in language is responsible for the growth of prepositions" (*A Grammar of the Greek New Testament,* p. 554) and that "they help out the meaning of the case in a given context", it becomes absurd to discard them. It reduces the study of language to a simple mockery. We ought to apologize for introducing such a statement were it not that it has very high sanction indeed. It is phrases such as these that often captivate callow minds and erect prejudices that are not easily overthrown. The student cannot take refuge in the old lady's confidence that helps her to feel things in her bones. Anyway, intellectual rheumatism may be as painful as the bodily kind. Every fresh grammatical discovery causes a sharp twinge of pain. There are also quack cure-alls labelled "Every scholar agrees".

The Force of the Preposition

At any rate both prepositions are used in the New Testament in relation to our Lord's atoning work. He gave his life a ransom instead of many (Mark x. 45). But we have to heed Robertson's warning that "These important doctrinal passages [he includes the parallel passage of Matt. xx. 28] teach the substitutionary conception of Christ's death not because *ἀντί* of itself means 'instead', which is not true, but because the context renders any other resultant idea out of the question" (*A Grammar of the Greek New Testament,* p. 573). We may recognize that the primary idea is that of exchange. It might be said that the more frequent preposition *ὑπέρ* has more correctly the idea of imputed righteousness. The callous father may give his son a stone instead (*ἀντί*) of bread or instead (*ἀντί*) of a fish a serpent (Luke xi. 11). There is substitution or exchange here, but there is no connection between the two things exchanged. We could say a stone is a poor

substitute for bread, and a serpent is a poor substitute for fish. But when we think of the substitution as made "on behalf of" (ὑπέρ) the other person in view we are forced by the very language employed to consider the fact of relation.

How can the suffering of the Son of God be on my behalf unless He assumes a definite relation not only to me but to my wrongdoing? So far then from seeing in the use of the alternative preposition a weakening of the idea of a definite connection which relates Christ's righteousness to my sin, it is possible, we would say necessary, to recognize in this careful choice an effort to bind us to the view that there is an interchange of responsibility.

A Further Objection

But it might be contended that, while it is foolish to disregard prepositional uses in determining the meaning of God's message, we ought to allow the apostolic writers the ordinary freedom of speech that belongs to all men, and not bind them in iron fetters by the necessities which language imposed upon them. They spoke out of the rich fervour of renewed souls and revelled in the imagery of emancipation, so it is said, and now, in the cold analytical spirit of the study, a stern legal contractual method of speech is forced upon them. The language of the soul becomes the language of the lawyer's musty tomes. Certainly if the terms are unduly strained, such strictures apply. But even fervour will not excuse a direct attempt to mislead. In the apostolic message we find a rich variety of expressions that compels us to accept the deductions drawn from a close analysis of the prepositional usages. This is all the more remarkable inasmuch as the language we have in view is not confined to one writer, nor is it compassed by one set phrase.

Two Classes of Expression

For the sake of convenience, we may divide the type of expressions we have in view into two classes, so closely related that the division is not always easy to observe. There are, first, the various passages that speak in direct terms of our Lord taking our position and our responsibility. Then we have passages that indicate the very close relation between our Lord and His believing children. However much these relations overlap, both of them are clearly set forth in the New Testament. We have already referred to some of the first class, as, for example, John the Baptist's message: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." But there are many explicit statements which need careful consideration. The relation between our Lord and His children is in view in nearly all these passages, but we can defer consideration of that aspect, even if it involves a reconsideration of some texts, until we come to deal with the

very insistent problem of the relation of our Lord to the sin of man. Passages which imply or definitely assert such a relation also state clearly that our Lord assumed our responsibility and conferred on us immeasurable blessing, because He took our place. Of such passages the following are typical: "the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John x. 11)—the whole passage should be read; "being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation" (John xi. 51). Here the narrator sees an overruling providence in a wicked counsel of expediency. It reveals most clearly that, in his judgment, the death of our Lord Jesus Christ was something which provided blessing for the Jewish people. Even their guilty conspiracy against the sinless Son of God could not alter the divine purpose of grace. St. Peter has the same conviction: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. . . . For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts ii. 23, 39). There is a much more explicit passage in 1 Peter ii. 24, which expands the brief synopsis of the sermon as given by Luke: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." The contrast is made as emphatic as possible. It was He Himself who bare our sins. What relation subsists between our sins and the Son of God? Peter indicates that the purpose of the bearing of sins is in order that we might die to them. There could scarcely be a clearer indication that our guilty responsibility was met adequately by the sacrifice of our Lord. Yet Peter adds: "by whose stripes ye were healed", tabling in support the great message of the suffering servant, who "was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities" (Isa. liii. 5). And this message does not stand alone. It finds support from Paul, who daringly writes: "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. v. 21). Here the sense of imputation lies on the surface of the text. The One who knew no sin was made sin; made, that is, to stand in the place the sinner occupies, made to endure the reckoning of sin against Him at the hands of a righteous and loving God. And the purpose is clearly indicated: it was in order that the guilty ones might be made to stand in the place of the righteous, made to receive the reward which could only be obtained by a perfect obedience, an obedience which He had clearly rendered.

It seems impossible to read anything else than a statement of the imputation of sin and the imputation of righteousness into this passage. And it does not stand alone in Paul's writings. A passage which discusses at length the relation of our Lord to the persons whom He seeks to redeem has at the very heart of it the explicit assertion:

"By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. v. 19). Writing to the Galatians, Paul can say: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. iii. 13).[1] The only sense in which our Lord could be made a curse is in the sense of taking the responsibility of the curse due to us, which involves the idea of imputation. In the Epistle to the Ephesians the imagery is again changed and our Lord is spoken of as reconciling unto God Jew and Gentile in one body, by the cross (Eph. ii. 16). In writing to the Philippians he declares his desire in the following terms: "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phil. iii. 9). Here Paul contrasts a righteousness which is his own and arises out of works, the obedience to the law, with a righteousness which has its source not in law but in God Himself, realized by means of faith in Jesus Christ. The contrast between his own righteousness and a righteousness secured by means of faith has scarcely any intelligible meaning if we do not understand him to declare that the alternative righteousness which is of God and of Christ is secured apart from his own efforts at holiness. In Colossians Paul speaks of a reconciliation of those who were alienated in their minds by wicked works, not by any repentance of their own, though such repentance is not, of course, denied, but in the body of the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, through death (Col. i. 20, 22). It is by this means those who were alienated were presented "holy and unblameable and unreprovable in his sight". Here also, the contrast between their condition of wickedness and their standing before God is forcibly brought out. The medium which effects the change is the body of our Lord, given over to death. The Epistles to the Thessalonians are mainly occupied with the question of the Lord's second advent. Yet there is the reference which tells us that the Lord's death was concerned with us, in order that we might live together with Him (1 Thess. v. 10). In the pastoral epistles the message of the Lord Himself, "who gave himself a ransom for all", is repeated (1 Tim. ii. 6). Here Robertson puts it: "Both ἀντί and ὑπέρ combine with λύτρον in expressing the idea" that Christ's offering was instead of that which we were bound to make and could not. (*A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p. 573). In the Epistle to the Hebrews the representative character of priesthood generally (Heb. v. 1), and of our Lord Jesus Christ's Priesthood particularly (Heb. ix. 28, x. 10, 14, xiii. 12), is mentioned so often as to constitute one of the main themes of the epistle. John has the idea of our Lord as an Advocate. He adopts the Pauline term

[1] Robertson gives an interesting exposition of this verse: "Christ bought us 'out from under' the curse of the law by becoming a curse 'over' us (between the suspended cause and us), and thus rescued us *out from under* the curse" (*A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p. 631).

"propitiation", and he lays much emphasis on the fact that eternal life is in Christ. The Book of the Revelation has the paean of praise: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us [or loosed us] from our sins in his own blood" (Rev. i. 5). Every writer in the New Testament, who has dealt at any length with the passive obedience of Jesus Christ our Lord, uses language that is most readily interpreted as teaching that the work of Christ is reckoned to us, as our guilt is reckoned as His.

A Solid Basis

Imputed righteousness stands solidly on the bedrock of Scripture. In various phrases, the whole New Testament, when treating on this subject, re-echoes the language of St. Paul, who spoke of David describing "the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works"; a righteousness which he elsewhere speaks of as "the righteousness of Christ" and "the righteousness of God", and places in contrast to his own righteousness, which has its source in the law.

But valuable and significant as is this consenus of opinion regarding the relation of the Saviour to the sinner, we get much greater light on the whole question when we turn to the second aspect of the New Testament witness. Here there is a form of speech which outlines in some measure the very close relation subsisting between our Lord and His people. Not only is the connection asserted, but we are also given at least a hint as to the grounds of such connection. We may start with the passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which informs us: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. ii. 14, 15). We are here given a ground for the close relation, a relation which is earlier described: "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one" (Heb. ii. 11). The simplest and most convincing interpretation is that which sees in the argument the necessity for our Lord to become completely one in nature with us, thereby, as it were, earning the right to represent us in suffering, and securing for us the right to be represented in His satisfaction for sin. St. Paul expresses the same truth: "made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. iv. 4, 5). There is here a double relation based, as in Hebrews, on an identity of nature. Jesus Christ assumed our condition, became obedient unto the law for man, and as a consequence, through His union with us, we receive the gift of adoption to be the sons of God. The incarnation is the basis of those blessings which belong to us in Christ. True they

are the gift of God's grace, but they are conditioned by the underlying unity in nature which our Lord assumed and which makes possible this gift of God's grace.

Cur Deus Homo?

Anselm, of course, in his classical work *Cur Deus Homo?*, expands this idea. This identity in nature is made the condition of an identity in experience: "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb. ii. 17). But although the very physical nature of Christ is the basis of this intimate union, it must be consummated in a moral union, an identity of will and purpose. It is here that the message concerning regeneration links itself with the message concerning incarnation. As Christ was born of a woman in order that He might share our experience, so we need to be born of the Spirit in order that we may share His experience. Both St. Paul and St. John are emphatic on this aspect of union with Christ. It is "in him" that we are made the righteousness of God. It is "in him" that eternal life abides. "He that hath the Son hath the life." This realized union is expressed by faith. It is when we are found "in him" that we possess the righteousness which is of God by means of faith. The physical identity moves on to a moral identity. The just man lives by faith because the new moral life of Jesus Christ our Lord communicated to us by the Holy Spirit must issue in and be developed by an act of reliance on Him. By faith we draw continually to ourselves the new experiences which are the outcome of the new life.

"In Christ" and Christ in Us

St. Paul is quite confident that the sinner must appreciate the work of Christ "for" us if he is to share continuously in the work of Christ "in" us. Indeed, the New Testament usage of the phrase "in Christ" must never be confused with the New Testament usage "Christ in us". The former phrase has a far wider signification. St. Paul's use of "in circumcision" and "in law" may give some idea as to the value he attaches to "in him". It conveys the idea that all the circumstances and associations which relate us to Christ are gathered into one pregnant phrase. So we are united with Him in the likeness of His death as a guarantee that we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. The identity goes deeper than any superficial division of men. "There is neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. iii. 11). In the parallel passage in Galatians iii. 28 the concluding idea is expressed in the words: "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus." In this connection also it is pertinent to notice the argument in Romans v, which finds an echo in 1 Corinthians

xv. 22, that the union of the race in Adam finds its counterpart in the union of the new race in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Two Opinions

There are two views entertained as to the meaning of this text. Augustine held the view that all humanity was truly in Adam and therefore all humanity truly fell in him. The Federal Theologians, who found strong support in Charles and A. A. Hodge, preferred to regard the sentence as due to a covenant entered into by God, of which the natural link with Adam was the base. As A. A. Hodge expresses it: "Without a miracle Adam's children must be carried along with him in his destinies. His own status was and must ever continue according to bare law, contingent upon freewill; God, therefore, as the benevolent and righteous guardian of the interests of all mortal creatures, graciously constituted him the federal head and representative of his race, as a whole, and promised him, for himself and for all, eternal life or confirmed holiness and happiness, on condition of temporary obedience, under favourable conditions, with the penalty for him and for them of death or condemnation and desertion, on condition of disobedience. This was an act of grace to him, as it substituted a temporal for an eternal probation" (*Outline of Theology*, p. 362). It would carry us too far afield to discuss the merits of the conflicting theories, and it is not necessary for our purpose. In both the natural relation is admitted and made the ground of a judicial act of God by which responsibility is incurred by others. That the obvious relation between the members of the human race, by which responsibility is shared, should thus be taken up into the sublime revelation of redemption is a factor which should be held in the greatest regard. In view of the New Testament hints as to an identity between the Saviour and the sinner, which involves Him in all the burdens and anxieties of our fallen state, sin only excepted and, in view of the correlated hints that His divine-human personality is such that we are or can become one with Him, in the triumph and victory which has thus been secured, it seems idle to reject a theological position that, as A. A. Hodge pertinently remarks, embodies "the consensus of Catholic and Protestant, Lutheran and Reformed, of Supralapsarian and Infralapsarian, of Gomar and Arminius, of the Synod of Dort and the Westminster Assembly, of Scotland and of New England" (ibid., p. 357).

Difference of Opinion in Roman Catholic and Protestant Circles

No doubt differences of opinion in minor points have prevented a full measure of agreement, and the modern Roman Catholic divine would find some difficulty in assenting to the imputed righteousness of Christ, notwithstanding a large measure of agreement regarding the

unity of the race in Adam and consequent penal effects. The Council of Trent, when considering the question of the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord, emphasizes more strongly the negative or privative idea of original sin, and, by a strange *volte-face,* the positive communication of righteousness as an inherent quality. But all students have been forced out of the purely individualistic standpoint and have been compelled to give some recognition to the fact that Christ and Adam both stand in such a moral relation to the sons of men that all are affected by their action.

Sanday and Headlam

For these reasons, which could be extended, we are not quite happy with the statement of Sanday and Headlam, in their excellent commentary on the Romans, that we must find room for some kind of legal fiction when dealing with the experience of redemption through Jesus Christ our Lord. The motive behind the comment is an excellent one. The writers were driven by the logic of facts to recognize that a form of representation lies behind alike the figures employed and the direct assertions made by St. Paul in this most wonderful of all his wonderful epistles. With that attitude, we find ourselves in fullest sympathy. But the term "legal fiction" is not a very happy one. It suggests to the ordinary reader a sense of unreality, whereas Paul strives to give us the deepest sense of reality. That we are not able fully to understand those deeper relations which bind man to man in the unity of the universe is no reason why we should reduce them to the category of fiction. We think there is much to be said for the conclusion here of A. A. Hodge: "Does not the remaining mystery lose itself in that abyss which is opened by *the fact of the permission of sin,* before which all schools of theists on this side the veil must bow in silence?" (ibid., p. 366). But the fact that all men are bound together in the bundle of life is so persistent that, even if explanation fails us at a given point, it would be a gross absurdity to describe it as a fiction.

The fact of the incarnation is at least patent in revelation, and the unity of Christ, the Second Adam, with His children is declared to be a consequence of this fact. Only those who abide by the impossible position that the individual concludes his own destiny and fully explains his own character and actions are entitled even to argue that a transference of the guilt of one to another lies wholly outside the regions of observed facts: if we understand by guilt liability to punishment. We need to be on our guard against the too-ready assumption that that which is not easily understood is therefore unreal or untrue. The "orthodox" view can still command respect. It is, on the whole, the best explanation of a difficult matter. That it accounts for all the problems of life would be too much to claim for it. We must be content to assert that it meets most fully the declarations of Scripture.

CHAPTER VI

FAITH AND IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS

A Further Alternative View

Before leaving the subject it is advisable to indicate an opinion which has found wide acceptance in certain evangelical circles today. It is admitted that there is an imputation of righteousness, but it is denied that the righteousness of Christ is or can be imputed to us. Those who advocate the alternative opinion now in view would say that when Paul speaks of a righteousness of God manifested towards us, what he means is that our Lord, by virtue of His union with mankind, was enabled to offer a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. There is, then, a real reckoning or imputation of our sins to our Lord Jesus Christ. But the effect of that sacrifice is to enable God to remove the condemnation of the law and to substitute a different requirement from that which the law demands. The requirement is spoken of in one circle as "evangelical obedience". Christ atones for the offences under the law, and God now accepts the homage and service of a renewed heart. We do our best. Our best could not avail were it not for the sacrifice of Christ, but now our obedience can be received because, the law having been satisfied, God can make any conditions that seem best to His all-seeing wisdom as a ground of acceptance before Him.

But there is yet a further refinement of this view, in which faith itself apart from works is said to be the one and only condition of salvation. We often hear earnest young speakers telling an audience: "You will not be condemned for any sin except the sin of rejecting Christ. Unbelief alone remains as a barrier between you and the peace of God." It is not right to make men "offenders for a word". No doubt many of those who use expressions like that mean only that the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord avails to cleanse the sins of all who believe on Him. But we must remember that earnest souls can be found who insist that our faith—that is, our personal act of reliance on the Lord Jesus Christ—is in itself the ground of our righteousness. Nothing is imputed to us. Our act of reliance is accepted as placing us in a position of acceptance. We are free from the law through the death of Christ, and we are taken into the family of God, not only *because* we believe, which is a scriptural truth, but on the *ground* that we believe and not on the ground of any righteousness but solely on the ground of faith.

The Language of Scripture

When we study the Scriptures closely we find that the mode of expression used in them prevents any such inference. We are said to be justified by faith, where the Greek preposition ἐκ is used. The meaning is that faith is the occasion of our justification, not the cause of it. Again we are said to be justified through faith, where the use of διὰ with the genitive makes the meaning certainly "on account of", and not "because of", where the accusative would be used. We are not told that we are justified because of faith, in this sense, anywhere in the New Testament. Already we have referred to Ephesians ii. 8, where it is most likely, to say the least, that the apostle warns us that the faith by which we are justified "is not of ourselves", and where he certainly insists that salvation is not of works lest any man should boast. In Philippians i. 29 St. Paul tells us: "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Faith as a virtue or an inherent quality of the soul is contrasted with love in 1 Corinthians xiii, and such faith, even though it could remove mountains, is said to profit nothing apart from love. We are never told that faith justifies, unless in the context it is clearly indicated that the faith that justifies is reliance on God or our Lord Jesus Christ. For example, in Romans iv. 5 we read: "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." It is not faith as a human quality but faith in the gracious pardoning activity of God that secures the blessing. The mere act of believing cannot of itself secure the blessing unless it is rightly directed to the source of blessing in God. James, in his polemic against those who reduced faith to mere assent and held that it contained in it the secret of salvation, shows this most clearly. It is the fact that faith links us to God and works with our works. James is quite clear that faith simply as faith cannot save (Jas. ii. 14). The argument would be impossible if our faith in itself was reckoned as satisfying the demands of God's law, or substituted as a sufficient ground of acceptance on account of the satisfaction of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Lord's Miracles and Faith

The parallel usage in regard to our Lord's miracles helps us to understand the position even more clearly. We read many times, "Thy faith hath saved thee", but that does not mean that the gift of faith secured healing in itself, but rather that it drew from the Lord "the virtue" which healed them all. Faith has always an instrumental and never an originative function in justification. This is further emphasized by the fact that we are said to be "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. iii. 24). Again, we are said to be "justified by his blood" and "saved from

wrath through him" (Rom. v. 9). Again, we are justified "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. vi. 17). Such language would be wholly inappropriate if faith were the sole ground and cause of justification. It is quite appropriate if faith is the divinely appointed means by which we are justified.

If anyone asks how a room is lighted in the day-time it is correct to say that it is lighted by the windows or it is lighted by the sun, but the sense is different. Similarly we can say we are justified by grace as the originating source of the righeousness which God in His mercy has provided. We can say we are justified by or in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ as the material circumstance which procured our acceptance with God. In our Lord's death we died. It is because He shed His blood that we have acceptance with God. We are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus just as men were made whole in His name because the bloodshedding derives its efficacy from the purpose of God revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. We are justified by or in Christ because it is only through union with Him alike in His death and resurrection that the blessing comes to us. We are justified in the Spirit of our God because it is through the operation of God the Holy Spirit that we are brought into union with Christ, being born again to a living hope through the gospel. We are justified by faith because it is through an act of conscious reliance on Christ our Lord that we obtain the blessing which He has procured for us. And we are justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus because if faith is the means by which we appropriate the blessing of righteousness offered us in Christ Jesus our Lord, redemption is the means through which God is just in conferring upon us this status of righteousness. But to say that God accepts our faith in lieu of the righteous demands of His law is to throw us back on our own merits, however much the fact may be disguised, and to impair the gratuitous nature of the salvation which our Lord Jesus Christ offers to those who believe.

Two Grave Issues

It might appear as if this discussion is unimportant, but there are two grave issues depending upon it. The first is an issue affecting human conduct. If it be true that a lower standard is accepted and that the demands of God's law are now wholly abrogated it seems difficult to understand the indignant protest of Galatians ii. 17, which reads: "But, if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid." The older Arminian view which was adopted by Henry Hammond that our evangelical obedience was substituted for the full demands of God's holy law at least escapes this particular criticism. The context makes it quite clear that Paul is struggling to free his doctrine from the very consequence that is here attached to it. He

has stated that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by the faith of Jesus Christ. He immediately adds that if a man so justified is found a sinner he is so far in opposition and acting contrary to the divine purpose. In elaborating the same argument in Romans he asks the question: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid. Yea, we establish the law" (Rom. iii. 31). A careful comparison of this text with Romans vii. 6, where the same verb occurs, offers a very interesting line of thought. The law is not made of none effect, but we have died to the binding obligation in order that we might serve in newness of spirit. The great care taken to avoid the suggestion that the law is dead, and to substitute therefor the much more difficult simile of freedom achieved through our death, may serve as an example of the earnest desire of the apostle to avoid any suggestion that the moral code given from God has lost its efficacy. The evil of Antinomianism, the view that we could live in complete indifference to the revealed law of God and yet be saved, finds no countenance in Paul's argument. We serve, but we are freed from the accusing law, not because it has been relaxed, but because in Christ we have met its full demands. The history of this opinion when it reared its head in the olden days, even if we admit that the Anabaptists of that age have had their doings recorded only by their enemies, is sufficient warning against lightly adopting any such interpretation.

The second grave evil is that in denying the imputed righteousness of Christ this belief takes away from the fullness of His atoning work. The sinner is justified partly by the merits of Christ and partly by his own acceptance of those merits. We are told that Christ our Lord has made it possible to secure release from law. This, apparently on the theory, is the condition of all men alike. What constitutes the difference between the saved and the lost, is that the rejection of the offer of pardon through faith nullifies the whole work of God so far as the particular individual who rejects is concerned. On the other hand, the acceptance by faith of "the finished work of Christ" secures immediate acquittal and immediate sonship, so that the sinner's faith is added to the work of our gracious Lord and renders it effective. This is salvation by merit of our own, no matter how much the fact may be concealed from the many earnest people who adopt this view of God's grace. We stand here face to face with one of the deepest mysteries of the revelation of God. When the Infinite touches the finite there must be an element of the inexplicable. But there is an insistence in the New Testament on the fact that it is not given to man to clinch the work of God.

The Ordo Salutis

Here again we are suffering from neglecting the messages of older divines concerning the much discussed "ordo salutis", the various

stages in salvation. It does not seem quite correct to say "When you accept Christ you are born again", though if "born again" be taken to include a conscious experience of the effects of the new birth the expression might be allowed to pass. But it is wiser to keep the order given to us in John i. 12, 13: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The gift of faith is of God and is awakened in those born of God. This does not mean that man is wholly inoperative. But it does mean that when living faith in Christ awakes it is always traceable to the work of the Holy Ghost. Hebrews iv. 2 tells us: "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." The language here is guarded—the word that sounded in the ear did not profit because it was not united to faith in those that heard. So that the preacher has to pray that the work of the Spirit, who awakens faith, may accompany the word which he proclaims. The same idea is expressed in Luke xxiv. 45: "Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the scriptures." And in Acts xvi. 14: "Whose heart the Lord opened"; and again in Acts xxvi. 18: "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light."

The atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ secures for us all the conditions necessary for our acceptance before God. Therefore it is said that our Lord gives repentance to Israel and the forgiveness of sins (Acts v. 31). We have already seen that faith is an element in repentance. It is not an important matter to give the right place to every element in the salvation of man.

The Case of Abraham

What, then, is meant by the explicit statement: "Abraham believed God and it was accounted unto him for righteousness"? The answer is found in the whole argument as it is outlined for us in the Epistle to the Romans. He that believeth in God or in our Lord Jesus Christ, his faith is counted unto him for righteousness. But how is that righteousness secured? We have to turn back to the third chapter to find the answer. It is through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. It is a righteousness unto all and upon all them that believe. The preposition or prepositions used are significant. There is a variant reading which omits "upon all". But the statement that this righteousness is "unto all" that believe is clearly expressed. It is, if we may so express it, something extended towards all those who believe. It does not say it is a righteousness created by the act of faith. It is a righteousness terminating on those who believe. This would be rendered even more explicit if we retain the two prepositions as in the reading of the

Authorized Version. But we are not left to this minute analysis in order to determine the apostle's meaning. He sets out most clearly that the redemption is not only in Christ Jesus but that God hath set Him forth as a propitiation in His blood and that the faith which is accounted for righteousness is faith in One who shed His blood for us. The act of reliance on the Person of Jesus Christ our Lord secures that the satisfaction for sin which He rendered shall be made available to the repentant soul. It is not something added to the propitiation of Christ as a condition of salvation but the act of appropriation which enables the soul to cry: "He loved me and gave himself for me." It may be well to emphasize, that Romans iii. 25 can be rendered either as in the A.V. or with equal fidelity to the Greek: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation in his blood, by means of faith, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins done aforetime through the forbearance of God." But if we connect the words "in his blood" with "propitiation" rather than with "faith" the sense remains unaltered. God declares His righteousness in forgiving because He has provided a propitiation. That can mean only that it is the sacrifice of our Lord that secures forgiveness and that the forgiveness thus secured is conveyed to us by means of faith. There is a passage in Acts viii. 18 that helps to throw light upon the place of faith in the economy of justification. We read there: "And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostle's hands the Holy Ghost was given." The outward agency employed was the apostolic laying on of hands, but God the Holy Spirit in marvellous power was the essential gift. No school of theologians has ever held that the mere laying on of hands confers the gift. In the Roman Catholic system there must be the "due dispositions" on the part of the recipients. Yet here the very same form of expression "by means of" (διά with the genitive) occurs which is common where "the righteousness of God by faith" is discussed. This alternates with the idea of a righteousness resting upon or extending to faith. Such modern commentators, therefore, as rest the whole argument on the single expression "his faith was counted for righteousness" may justly be reminded that the whole burden of the Pauline message needs to be taken into consideration. If we follow the guidance of Robertson and hold that already the distinction between ἐίς and ἔν in the New Testament tends to disappear, we should have to say that the message may be that God has provided a righteousness which rests upon faith and is operative in the sphere of faith, because we are united to Christ in faith.

What is Faith?

But we are said to be justified by faith, and therefore it is important to enquire what is meant by faith. There is a most valuable discussion of this question in Bishop O'Brien's book, *The Nature and Effects of*

Faith. The book displays wide erudition and long and careful examination of the whole question. One of the important points that Bishop O'Brien makes is that we can discover the meaning of faith in the New Testament by noticing the word with which it is contrasted. In this connection what we may call the non-theological use is of very great significance. There is no danger of the intrusion of preconceived theological notions and the air is therefore clearer.

When we accept this method of examination we find that faith is opposed not only to non-faith, which, of course, does not provide a basis for comparison, but also frequently to doubt. In Matthew xiv, when Peter began to sink, we read that our Lord took him by the hand and held him up, saying: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Again we read in Matthew xxviii, when the Lord appeared after His resurrection to a company of people: "And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted." In both these examples the Greek verb means "to hold a divided opinion"—as we should say, to be of two minds, and therefore uncertain. Faith is a definite fixed attitude of mind. It is the condition where all conflicting courses are resolved into one definite line of action. It is the opposite of hesitation.

There is another verb used to express doubt and here also the contrast of faith is given to us. Mark xi. 23 reads: "For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith." In Matthew xxi. 21 our Lord said to His disciples: "Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done." In both these passages the verb employed to express doubt has the same quality of hesitation arising from inability to make a decision. The various factors that make up the conception are examined separately. The individual wavers between the pros and the cons and is unable to reach a definite conclusion. These contrasts establish for us that faith means an unshaken conviction.

Subjective or Objective

Sometimes the question is asked, Is this subjective or objective? Kant would maintain probably that faith operates in a region which lies outside demonstrated knowledge. Objectively it deals with probabilities, while subjectively it assures the soul of the reality of that which it apprehends. It may be doubted, however, if the question is really as much in point as is sometimes suggested. Knowledge differs from other elements in experience in the fact that it combines very closely the subjective and the objective. Indeed, it might be said that

this is the feature in which experience itself consists. Though we can distinguish between the apprehended object and the act of apprehension, in knowledge both are combined into a unity. Still, those who give faith a subjective value only regard it as an inner conviction, either wrought by the Spirit, which is the opinion of some Christians, or else due to some connection of thought generated by habit or early teaching or mass suggestion. There is at present a decided attempt to disparage faith, not by denying its reality but by offering a psychological explanation which divorces it from fact. Faith, we are told definitely, is not knowledge. Knowledge is the collection of information by observation and experiment. Faith occupies itself with the unseen.

The Character of Knowledge

It is easy to show that while there may be a measure of truth in the distinction between facts which are obtained by sense perception and convictions which do not depend on the senses for their verification, it is not an adequate explanation of knowledge itself. Behind observation and experiment there is the agent who observes and experiments, a fact which is often strangely overlooked. And when the agent observes and experiments he relies on certain principles of relation which are not in the object or experiment. The law of causation is not discovered by any analysis of experience; it is a law which makes experience possible. Certain unshaken convictions lie behind all knowledge, and we are justified in saying that knowledge would be impossible without faith. But such discussions, though most valuable and important, carry us outside the range of the New Testament message which is our immediate concern. In the New Testament, as we have seen, faith is contrasted with doubt in such a way as to exhibit it as unshaken conviction. Positively, it is presented in the same form. When Abraham accepted the promise of God against all outward appearances we are told: "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God" (Rom. iv. 20). Here we have the element of conviction exercising itself upon a promise of God. We have the same aspect of faith given to us in Acts xiv, 9, 10. The impotent man heard Paul speak. Paul, "stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked."

Subjectivity and Conviction

Someone is sure to ask here, "Is not that definitely subjective?" The answer is that it is no more subjective than any other conviction. We must not confuse the proposition "a man may be mistaken" with the proposition "conviction is purely subjective". The first is true. The second is open to serious argument from many points of view. Ptolemy had a strong conviction that the sun moved round the earth.

It was based on observation and experiment. Others got the same conviction by relying on Ptolemy's word. The conviction was not well-founded. But it was there. In the case of the lame man the faith of the man was well-founded. He leaped and walked. If we can avoid confusing our terminology we will have achieved something. Faith may direct itself to a message or a promise. It will express itself in unshaken confidence in the message. But faith may direct itself to a person. In that case it will express itself as unshaken confidence in the individual and his claims. We have an example of mistaken confidence of this sort in Acts viii. 9, 10: "But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God." The word for bewitched is often rendered "to astonish" or "to cause wonder". Simon offered such evidence in jugglery that the people believed he was a man of divine power. Here the usual distinction between subjective and objective is not easily established. But the fact that the evidence awakened confidence, even if it were afterwards dispelled, lies on the face of the narrative. And, of course, the full testimony of Scripture can be adduced to establish that faith in God or in our Lord Jesus Christ is not only confidence but confidence that is well-founded. It seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that the divorce between faith and knowledge which is sometimes made is not supported by Scripture.

The Grammar of Assent

Newman, in his *Grammar of Assent,* while he recognizes this element of certainty in faith, in our judgment also distorts it by separating it from the ordinary processes of the understanding. According to Newman, faith is an "illative sense", a species of direct impression created by God and never lost. There is a strange resemblance between Barth and Newman here. A difficulty for Newman's theory is found in the fact that he experienced a type of conversion at an early age which brought him into close touch with Methodist theology. We also remember that he claimed to "owe his soul" to the strong Calvinist Thomas Scott whose commentary on the Bible greatly influenced him. But there is a wide gulf between the Newman of those early days and Newman the strong Tractarian. The gulf was widened when he parted with Pusey and the traditions of the Church of England even in the form that he imagined them in Tract XC. How can this be reconciled with the permanency that attaches to faith?[1] Newman has his own ingenious way of defending his pet

[1] I do not enter into the vexed question, ventilated by Newman's brother Francis, as to whether Newman's account of his experiences is always consistent with the facts.

theory. He holds that there were two elements in his early experience. The Methodist element which was due to environment and early prejudice and the "illative" sense of the reality of God. The former, being human and false, disappeared. The latter, being of God, remained with him. The difficulty in his theory is that there must be a permanent element in all our apprehensions; otherwise our mental life would be reduced to anarchy. To say that the divine element is that which I still retain is to proffer a matter of individual predilection as a clear indication that God has spoken to the soul. A convert from Romanism might as easily suggest that the old experience of Romanism was false, with the one exception that it conveyed to the soul a sense of God. But weak as Newman's argument appears, it conceals within it the scriptural truth that faith is of God and that it is a permanent attitude of the soul. The element of confidence cannot be removed from it and when the vision of God bursts on the soul, confidence reaches its highest point. But such confidence expresses itself in exactly the same way as any other conviction. The man who has come to believe continues to believe if the Word of God has really taken root in his soul. But he exercises faith in God because of the knowledge which has come to him and in the manner in which he exercises faith in any other person or thing. The difference between him and the unrepentant and unregenerate is that, in the words of St. Paul, the eyes of his understanding are opened (Eph. i. 18). In the words of Paul again: "The old things are passed away; behold, they are become new" (2 Cor. v. 17, R.V.). The old activities, ambitions, desires have been redirected and re-formed. All things are now of God. Yet the relation of part to part remains. Faith is not wholly foreign power, but it has attained for itself a new object.

Canon Scott Holland, in *Lux Mundi,* writes, "Faith is the spirit of confident surrender, which can only be justified by an inner identification of life. Its primary note, therefore, will be *trust*—that trust of Another, which needs no ulterior grounds on which to base itself, beyond what is involved in the inherent law of this life" (p. 14). It is not necessary to adopt fully Canon Scott Holland's theory that faith is a basal act of the personality on which all other activities depend and from which they all issue, in order to appreciate the significance of the words we have quoted. Not only is faith an outcome of knowledge, but when especially it concerns itself with knowledge of a person it must inevitably involve an act of reliance. We may have an unshaken confidence in a truth at least theoretically and it may not compel any further act of will on our part than that which is involved in the direction of attention to the truth observed. But it is otherwise when faith means reliance on the promise or the merits of another. Then the act of will which directs attention to the truth is inevitably supplemented by the act of will which reposes confidence in the person

from whom the truth proceeds. This aspect is very clearly brought out in the expressions "believe in", "believe on", "believing the word of anyone", which are of such frequent occurrence in the Scripture and particularly in the New Testament. Thus in 1 Timothy iii. 16 we read that "God manifest in the flesh" was "believed on in the world". In Galatians ii. 16 St. Paul writes again: "Even we have believed in Jesus Christ." We meet in these passages that interchange of εἰς and ἐν to which we have already directed attention. In 1 Timothy i. 16 the phrase reads "them which should hereafter believe on him" when the preposition ἐπι is used with its usual sense of reposing upon, having confidence in. The very use of various prepositions directs our attention to the fact that the value of faith is in the quality which it possesses of going out to another object and depending on it. We trust a bridge to carry us across a stream; we trust a medicine to effect an alteration in our health; we trust a person, reposing confidence in his knowledge, his skill or his power.

The highest form of faith is that personal confidence which is awakened by a revelation of character. This is the meaning of the constant passages that relate faith to a person. "Abraham believed God" (Rom. iv. 3); "what he had promised, he was able also to perform" (Rom. iv. 21); "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Eph. iii. 17); "to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled" (Col. i. 22, 23); "rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith" (Col. ii. 7); "to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (2 Thess. i. 10). The burden of all these passages is that there is a confidence awakened by the testimony of another or by the witness borne to the work and power of another. We must distinguish between this act of faith which is an activity of the soul and the content of faith as it is expressed in such exhortations as "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3, R.V.); "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. iv. 5); "holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience" (1 Tim. iii. 9).

The Power of Faith not Inherent

If faith were, as so many imagine, a quality with an inherent power in itself to produce certain spiritual results, then the nexus between truth and faith would be broken. We could believe anything, and through the strength of our convictions attain great results. But the Bible message is entirely different. Faith is the bond that unites us to God and our Lord Jesus Christ, but its efficacy depends on the object to which it unites us. We lay hold of pardon not because we believe we are pardoned but because God has secured a way of pardon for us and we put our trust in God and in His way. As a consequence

it is necessary that the ground of pardon should be clearly set forth. Knowledge is a vital element in faith. We must know the Saviour in whom we believe and the reason why faith in Him is effective. No doubt a very simple faith is quite sufficient to bring blessing to the soul. But an erroneous faith is capable of working great havoc. St. Paul is so convinced of this that he turns aside to correct the mistaken view of the Galatians. He even goes so far as to say, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. v. 4). The importance of *the* faith—that is, "the content of revealed knowledge on which our confidence is based" —is that it keeps unclouded in our minds the great facts on which we rely as revealing alike God's character and God's work for us. Hence the urgency with which the Corinthians are urged to keep in memory what Paul preached unto them (1 Cor. xv. 2). It is for the same reason that the Colossians are warned "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. ii. 8). It is in the same strain that Peter warns us to resist the devil "stedfast in the faith" (1 Pet. v. 9). St. Paul exhorts Timothy to war a good warfare, "Holding faith, and a good conscience, which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck" (1 Tim. i. 19). Because of this danger Timothy is exhorted to "Hold fast the form of sound words" and to keep that which was committed unto him (2 Tim. i. 13, 14). Most of those who read this book will know that the last message has been rendered "Guard the good deposit".

Insistence on the Form of Sound Words

It is interesting to notice that this insistence on a form of sound words emerges very frequently when the ground on which the true faith rests has been assailed in some form. The Galatians were tempted to listen to Judaizers; the Corinthians were in danger of accepting the views of Greek philosophy on the state of the dead. The Colossians sought to combine Gnosticism with some form of Judaism. That means that the object of faith must be stated with great definiteness if the full result of faith is to be secured. Anything which tends to diminish personal reliance or to substitute another hope for that which is set forth in the Gospel ultimately weakens faith until at length, if the process goes on unchecked, the vital power in belief is destroyed. At the present time there is a vulgar opinion that faith can be cultivated by various methods, and that is all that is necessary. Belief is important, but the contents of belief are not nearly so important. It is even held that the attempt at definition destroys the validity of faith. To introduce the element of reason is to step out of the enchanted region in which faith removes mountains. The quotation given from Canon Scott Holland in *Lux Mundi* may not in itself lead to this conclusion,

but it has often been used as if it did. Tertullian, the great Latin apologist, wrote: "Credo quia absurdum", "I believe because it is absurd". Augustine did not accept this position yet he wrote: "Credo ut intelligam", "I believe that I may understand". It is a matter of importance to get these relations clear in our mind. It does not seem to be wise to regard faith as a foundation out of which all other capacities spring. It seems better to regard the whole personality as a centre of activity, and faith as the attitude of the personality when confronted with an object which invites confidence. The highest form of this confidence consists in the outgoing of confidence in a person. If we take that view we will recognize at once that knowledge is of vital importance. It is not only important that we should believe, but it is most important in what and in whom we should believe. What we believe is important because it is the well-attested evidence of acts and words that evokes the confidence in a person that is the highest act of faith.

Paul on Mars Hill

This is brought out very forcibly in Paul's address on Mars Hill. Giving the message as to the need of repentance, Paul said: "God . . . commandeth all men every where to repent: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts xvii. 30, 31). The message here is most pertinent because the word translated "assurance" is the word which in other connections is translated "faith". Perhaps it would not be far from the sense if we paraphrased: "God hath appointed a day to judge the world and a Man whom He hath marked out for the purpose, and, in order that all may know that the Man so marked out is capable of exercising His office, He has supplied a sufficient ground of confidence because He raised Him from the dead." The apostle says to the cultured Athenian, "There is evidence on which you may base your confidence. The Christ in whom you are asked to place your trust has supplied you with credentials that are unimpeachable. He rose from the dead." It is because of this necessity to supply adequate reasons on which faith can exercise itself that the early preachers spoke of Jesus and the resurrection and insisted that they had not followed cunningly devised fables nor were the things, of which they were witnesses, done in a corner.

Credo ut Intelligam

Yet there is another truth in the phrase "Credo ut intelligam", a truth which finds support in the ordinary experiences of life. If we reject the earlier indications afforded of any series of facts we close

the door against the further unfolding of experience. The full truth does not come to us at once. Bacon saw this when he said that we can only learn to understand Nature by obeying her. The best example, perhaps, in the New Testament is the story of the blind man in John ix. He was challenged by the Pharisees, but he held on firmly to the fact in his experience that he had been cured and that the Man who cured him must have close connection with God. All arguments were shattered on his solid conviction: "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." To him the Lord in a further act of grace revealed Himself as the Son of God, saying: "Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him" (John ix. 37, 38). If we exercise faith in what we know we proceed to learn more. The implications in an embryonic faith unfold through its exercise or are concealed for ever in the case of those who reject the first intimations. It is a mistake to reject clear evidence because it fails to explain everything.

CHAPTER VII

"FIDES INFORMIS" AND "FORMATA"

The progress from an elementary conviction to the deeper region of supreme and unwavering confidence represents possibly the full measure of truth in the Roman Catholic doctrine of the "fides informis" and the "fides formata". According to this theory faith unformed is simple assent. It is the condition of all further progress, but until it is "informed" by charity it has no efficacy for salvation. The saying of St. Paul in Galatians, "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (v. 6), is frequently quoted in favour of this idea. But the obvious objection to the theory as it has been developed is that the character of faith itself is altered. At first it is pure confidence, which displays itself in the form of an acceptance of a particular set of propositions as true. Then it becomes a mixed sentiment. It continues to be assent and therefore faith, but now it adds to itself love. This composite sentiment takes the same name as the simple sentiment, and so confusion is created. What the apostle says is something quite different. He says faith is the all-important element in our acceptance in Christ Jesus, but this faith works through love or is wrought in us by means of love. Faith is not filled out by love, but faith being confidence in One who loved us and gave Himself for us must express itself by means of love. He is giving voice to the same sentiment as St. John when he wrote: "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John iv. 19). It is a mistake to alter the character of faith by compounding it with other qualities of the soul. The truth is that faith, when it is exercised on a particular object, operates according to the qualities that belong to that object. Faith in a scientific fact "worketh" by observation and experiment. These are not added qualities to the character of faith, but they are necessary concomitants to its exercise in that direction. Faith in a beneficent person must in the same way evoke in its possessor the response of love. It is impossible to believe that we are the beneficiaries of a gracious God without responding to His generous gifts with the warm devotion of our heart.

Faith and Prayer

Similarly, when we regard the duty and privilege of prayer we find that the faith which conditions true prayer must contain in it the conviction that God exists and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Faith of this sort naturally evokes prayer, yet the prayer is not part of faith though it is the prayer of faith and so its expression.

The Warning of James

But we may be told that James warns us against this "fides informis" when he advises us that "the devils also believe, and tremble" (Jas. ii. 19). There is, indeed, the truth, outlined by James, that faith of this sort does exist, but it is not unshaken confidence in a person but unshaken confidence in a fact. Saving faith does not add to itself any other quality, but when possessed, it relates the individual to God in a different way. The devils believe and hate. They maintain themselves in revolt against God. They cannot deny His existence, but they cannot believe in His grace and mercy. The repentant sinner not only believes that there is a God but he believes that there is a justifying God, a God who blots out his transgressions. The quality of the belief differs because its content is different, but it retains its essential character of an act of unshaken confidence, directed now, however, not to the fact of God's existence but to the fact of God's grace. The words employed are similar in construction to those in Ephesians ii. 8: "For by grace are ye saved through faith." In this construction grace is not "informed" by faith, nor does faith in any sense become grace.

But grace works by creating faith or, on an alternative interpretation, grace comes to the individual by means of faith. Similarly we are justified in arguing that faith is not "informed" by love, nor does faith become love or adopt love as one constituent element in its character, but faith awakens love, a separate quality of the soul but necessary as an inevitable consequence of saving faith, or, on an alternative interpretation, faith expresses itself in the individual by means of love, and can only so express itself. In some quarters this particular relation is confused and we are of opinion that such is the case in the Roman view. The only truth, therefore, that we can recognize in the notion of "informed" faith is that faith may and can develop, though in the process it does not absorb any other faculty of the soul. It remains confidence or reliance, although it gathers to itself fresh grounds on which this confidence reposes. The case of the Samaritans may illustrate this development. First they believed the woman. When they came face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ their first, perhaps vague, impressions were deepened and clarified (John iv. 39–42).

Homily on the Salvation of Man

In the remarkable Homily on the Salvation of Man, which has peculiar authority in the Church of England, as it is quoted in the eleventh article as offering a more detailed exposition of the doctrine therein set forth, this point of view is set out unequivocally. The homily is, on good grounds, credited to the pen of Archbishop Cranmer. Historians are of opinion that the doctrine therein enunciated influenced even Cardinal Pole, and for that reason the question

of justification by faith did not claim the tragic attention that attached in those days to the dogma of transubstantiation. The homily declares, amongst very much that is valuable, that the doctrine of justification by faith does not shut out other virtues such as love, dread or obedience, but that "it shutteth them out from the office of justifying". The reason advanced at great length is that nothing of human merit can be included either as a condition of or an additional contribution to God's grace.

The Double Character of Faith

Faith viewed as an activity of the soul has two characters. It is a virtue because it indicates a right relation to God. The believing man recognizes the claims of God on his soul. Unbelief is always treated as a sin. The Holy Spirit, our Lord says, "will convict the world in respect of sin . . . because they believe not on me" (John xvi. 8, 9, R.V.). The very fact that a man cannot or does not believe is sufficient proof that such a man has sin in his soul. But St. Paul assures us that of the three permanent qualities of the soul, faith, hope and love, the greatest is love. Love is higher than faith. It is higher than duty. It is the one great alchemy that blends every element in the soul into one harmonious whole. Why, then, is love not chosen as the medium through which the blessings of pardon and peace come to us? The answer has already been given in the foregoing exposition, but it may prove of help to isolate this characteristic and repeat what has been suggested if not said. Faith has a special characteristic. It holds in itself the concept of our dependence and of God's great sufficiency. While it is true that the failure to recognize these two crucial facts is conclusive evidence of sin, it is also true that the recognition of them involves an attitude of soul in itself wholly distinct from that which is generated by love or, from another point of view, that which generates love. It is the attitude which recognizes man's helplessness and need and which clings with intense concentration to the enabling power of God. The self is lost in entire abandonment to God. We do not think even of the necessary response of love, although that is later inevitable; we think only of our need and of God's provision on which we lay hold. In this aspect faith is not conceived as a competing virtue in the soul but as a venture forth on the power and grace of another. There is no merit in the beggar's hand. Yet it is the beggar's hand that receives the gift. Afterwards the warm glow of affection suffuses his whole being. At first he knows only his need and the donor's gracious supply to meet it.

Bishop Gore's View

It is for that reason that we find ourselves unable to accept Bishop Gore's presentation of justification, which, as we understand it, is a modification of the older view of a demanded "evangelical" obedience.

The older view as propounded, say, by Limbrock, and largely accepted by Henry Hammond, holds that we are justified by faith because "faith is a short name for all the Christian virtues". Grotius, a celebrated Dutch theologian of the seventeenth century, in his view of the atonement, suggested that God satisfied the principles of collective justice in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ and now welcomes the individual sinner on repentance and obedience; that is, such obedience as he can render. On this view faith is not really faith at all, but a metonymy for all the capacities of the soul turned God-ward. Whether Dr. Gore accepts this point of view or not, he has elected to present the position from a slightly different angle. He holds to the view that justification in its completed form includes and demands perfect holiness. He is also sensible of the fact that such holiness has not been attained by the Christian, who nevertheless regards God as his Father and truly believes on the Son of God. He seeks to overcome the difficulty by a theory of what we feel justified in calling "anticipatory justification". On this theory we are justified by faith only in the sense that, once the soul possesses and maintains faith, the stages that lead up to the final emancipation from sin will inevitably follow. God justifies us, not simply because we now believe, but since there exists in us a living faith which has in it all the promise of the future; He accepts us for what we will become. This is the forensic element in justification which Gore accepts in the way we have indicated.

Evidently Gore falls back on Scott Holland's view in *Lux Mundi* that faith is a basal faculty involving the personality irrevocably. From this it is easy to say that the embryonic condition appears before the All-seeing as the fully developed condition. Hence we are justified by faith, but we are only provisionally justified.

Objections to Gore's View

There are several serious objections to this view. In the first place it strains very seriously the Scripture terminology. "They which believe are justified from all things" must be read as though it said: "They which believe have a potential justification from all things, a justification which is secured at the end by several other virtuous actions and not by believing alone." No one reading the text as it appears in Acts xiii. 38, 39 would draw that meaning from it unless held by a preconceived idea which, of course, may or may not be forced upon him by the consistent language of Scripture as gathered from all the passages in view. The text as it reads sets the matter out in a rather unusual way. Taking the order of the Greek words, it says: "Be it known therefore to you brethren through this man the forgiveness of sins to be preached, and from all the things from which he is not able to be justified in the law of Moses, in this man everyone who believeth to be justified." The language does not suggest anything potential nor yet anything remote.

It speaks of two conditions: a law of Moses which could not justify and a proclamation of justification from all things by a Man, the condition laid down being simply that such justification comes to everyone who believeth. Of course, it can be urged in reply that the use of the infinitive does not directly exclude the idea of a process which has a definite starting-point. All that can be contended is that the natural use of language suggests an immediate rather than a remote blessing.

Dr. Gore might say that justification is granted at once in view of the future. It seems strange, however, if this is so, that it is represented simply as granted on condition of faith. In Romans viii. 30 we have the stages in the believer's progress—foreordained, called, justified, glorified. There is no hint that the justified state is any less definite than the called state. Although all are regarded as certain, they are all specifically tabulated as distinct stages in experience and no hint is given that the justified state is proleptic as Dr. Gore suggests. The Lord's own use of the word suggests a transaction that has an immediate effect and not one that is conditioned by something in the future. "This man went down to his house justified" (Luke xviii. 14). It is not too much to say that the whole use of the word "justify" both in its theological and its ordinary employment points to an immediate action with an immediate consequence.

A More Serious Objection

But a mere grammatical argument has little weight with many people. We find the more serious objection in the fact that this opinion runs counter to the continual contrast running throughout the whole New Testament between justification by merit and justification by faith. In the passage already quoted (Acts xiii 38, 39) we are told that through our Lord Jesus Christ all that believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justfied by the law of Moses. Again, St. Paul warns us that it is the man who worketh not but believeth in Him who justifies the ungodly whose faith is reckoned for righteousness. It is when we are sinners that we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son. The contrast is so clearly laid down between faith and works that any theory which ultimately equates faith and works must be rejected. The older theory of "evangelical obedience" and the new theory which suggests that faith is acceptable because it contains the promise of works are alike at variance with the scriptural message. It is true that faith contains in it the promise of works, but that is not the ground on which it secures acceptance with God. That ground is simply the reaching out in confidence on the merits of One who died, "the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God".

Pipes and Reservoirs

We cannot get water from a reservoir unless the pipes are laid down to convey it. But all the piping in the world would not get a drop of

water from a reservoir that had run dry. The pipes are the means, but the water is the cause of our refreshment. Even so the value of faith resides in the fact that through it we make contact with Jesus Christ our Lord, "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30). To be justified, then, is to be accepted of God as righteous. Because God is able through the propitiation which has been made by our Lord Jesus Christ to accept us into His family; to blot out our transgressions; to look favourably upon us in grace; all other blessings flow from this beginning in our experience. The New Testament teaches that our Lord Jesus Christ secured all these benefits by His death and resurrection, "who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works" (Titus ii. 14, R.V.). If we may so put it, there is an anxiety on the part of the New Testament writers to emphasize that the beginning of salvation is with God and that salvation comes wholly from God. On the side of God, it is "by means of" Jesus Christ our Lord. On the side of man, justification is "by means of" faith. But the order is carefully preserved. It is first "by means of" Jesus Christ our Lord and only on account of this "by means of" faith. And so St. Paul in the same Epistle to Titus continues his message, writing: "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus iii. 3–7). The meaning of "the washing of regeneration" has been already considered when the relation between regeneration and baptism was discussed. Many, though not all, see a reference to baptism here.

But the important point to notice in this connection is that through the washing and renewing, which have been made ours through the outpouring of the Spirit, we receive the blessing of salvation. These benefits are bestowed in order that, being justified by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we might be made heirs. It is not that we believe and then the blessing comes. It is after that the kindness of God our Saviour appeared that then we experience washing and renewing and are justified by grace. Perhaps we may here also read "in the sphere of" His grace. We must be found in the circle of God's redeeming activity before faith awakens in the soul. We do not grasp God. He lays hold of us. It is God who separates us from our mother's womb, who calls us by His grace. This raises great questions as to the relation between

Creator and creature, and it does us good to remember that there are depths in the purposes of God that we cannot plumb with our finite line. But it is necessary always to keep close to the revelation which God has made to us and not to be wise above that which is written.

An Unthinking Comment

"But that," says the unthinking, "lands you in Calvinism." Wherever it lands us, if it brings us to God, to Him be the glory. The insistence on the fact that God provided the remedy and shed forth His Spirit on vessels prepared unto glory is too widely distributed in the New Testament to excuse anyone from neglecting it. The older Arminian writers appreciated the problem and sought to solve it by an appeal to God's foreknowledge. We fear that the Moderns simply leave it alone. This is a great mistake. It shuts off large passages of Scripture from consideration. The reader treats them the way the old hedge-schoolmaster treated difficult words. He said: "Let us face them boldly and—pass on." Justification is an act of grace and does not depend on our fitness.

The Council of Trent

The Council of Trent speaks of man disposing himself by his will for the reception of the Grace of God. The New Testament, on the contrary, speaks of the call of God which is a veritable quickening from the dead in response to which the new-born soul leaps to that assurance of faith which justifies those who believe in Jesus. We are not saved by believing we are saved, as some slanderously report of us, but we are saved by believing in Jesus Christ our Lord. Faith links us consciously to Him and, because we are in Him, the law can exercise no further claim on us for punishment. As Dr. Denney puts it, the simple words of the hymn, "Jesus paid it all", are truer to the gospel message than the most elaborate theory that at heart denies its truth. But if this be so the doctrine of imputed righteousness is given a new meaning. We must be on our guard against substituting faith for the merits of Christ. It is because of what He has done we are saved, and not because we have accepted Him. Acceptance is necessary. It is the manward side of God's work of grace, but it must not be made the prime condition.

A Wrong Emphasis

The result of over-emphasis on man's response and under-emphasis on Christ's atoning merit is to create an emotional reaction which, because it lacks root, finally withers away. This is a danger to which fervent souls are peculiarly subject. The proper corrective is to study with diligence the principles which lie behind what older theologians call the "Ordo salutis". When we recognize that the Spirit of God alone can waken souls to a sense of need and so bring them to faith in Christ our Lord we will perceive that there are features in God's

great message of grace which reach into the secret souls of the Most High. We will be correspondingly humble and receive at His hand that which He graciously bestows. Luther was right when he described the doctrine of justification by faith only as "doctrina aut stantis aut cadentis ecclesiae", "the doctrine of a standing or a falling Church". The tendency to weaken the testimony to a salvation which is purely gratuitous, must be sternly withstood. It is for that reason we cannot accept any theory which would ascribe either to our works or to the inherent quality of our faith the ground of salvation, or permit either to be accounted as part of the satisfaction which God demands as a condition of acceptance before Him.

Some forms of mysticism have fallen into this error. The centre of gravity has been shifted from an objective satisfaction offered on our behalf and in our stead to an inner identification of our spirit with the Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord. On this view acceptance with God follows union with God, and this is brought about by an absorption of our spirit in the Spirit of God Himself. Justification is our acceptance because of an ideal which we are seeking to realize and to which we attain in moments of exaltation or ecstasy. This makes an appeal to sentiment and weakens the sense of sin. It lies behind the arguments of Christian Science and many other modern cults.

The Strength and Weakness of Mysticism

There is a very great truth in the presentation of the idea of union with Christ and with God, and we must not overlook that fact. Because of this truth many are led to ignore the deeper truth that there can be no such union until right relations are established between the soul and God, and that this is a task utterly beyond the power of man. Because it was beyond man's power it was committed in the mercy of God to "him who loved us and loosed us from our sins in his own blood". The type of theology that has been called liberal or modernist leans in the direction of identification in thought between the believer and his Lord. On this view the great value of the life and teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ resides in the stimulus which it gives to man in his efforts to grope after God if haply he may find Him. In the Modernist scheme of things the whole religious phenomena in the world may be explained as an effort after God. The difference between the great ethnic religions and the religion of Jesus Christ is one of degree, certainly not one of kind. In Christ we find the fulfilment of all our ideals and, consequently, the true inspiration of all our endeavour.

The Barthian Revolt

There is here also an important truth which cannot be overlooked. In reaction from the strong Modernist position, Karl Barth and his followers have been tempted to deny any search after God on the part

of unrenewed man. They rightly lay emphasis on the need of an approach from God to man, but some of their language at least implies that in that approach God acts in a sovereign manner which takes no account of man's impulses, desires and modes of reasoning. On the contrary, God works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. God working in us indicates that the natural capacities of man are redirected by the grace of the Spirit so that he lays hold by faith of the offered salvation.

The Stumbling-block to Modernism

The stumbling-block in the way of all naturalistic or modernistic interpretations is the relation of the death of Christ to the justification of man. The tendency in all such thought is to shift the emphasis from the sacrifice of Christ to our appropriation of God's gift through faith. The dynamic is supposed to reside in our act of identification. What we do and what we think are the important matters. As might naturally be expected, there is much syncretism, and some may not recognize the description of Modernism because they have seen many varieties in some of which the need of a sacrifice for sin is strongly emphasized. We can be thankful for every approach to the revealed gospel, but we should not therefore fail to appreciate that the dividing line between evangelical belief and the other alternatives offered for our consideration and acceptance is to be found just here. Once we cease to look to anything inherent in man as a ground of justification and look out on the work of Jesus Christ undertaken for us in the mercy of God, we come to regard faith as the instrument that lays hold on an accomplished work and not as an agency that creates in our soul the correct evaluation of life. No doubt when we rely on the work of Jesus Christ our Lord, undertaken on our behalf at Calvary, we do put a different value on life. But it is the value that declares that life apart from the awakening touch of the Spirit of God is valueless because it is estranged from God, and must continue valueless until we accept God's proffered gift of salvation which is in His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Faith is not a short name for all the Christian virtues. Faith is not a motive potentiality that must issue in a life of obedience. Faith is simply the clear window through which the sunlight streams. Faith is the empty hand which receives the gift. Faith is the open mouth into which the food is dropped. In itself it has no efficacy and can command no reward. But because, under the Spirit's guidance, it is directed to the source of all power and grace, it replaces our weakness by the Lord's strength, it removes our sin and substitutes His righteousness. It reposes on the Christ who wrought out our redemption and opens our soul to His sufficiency.

CHAPTER VIII

ADOPTION, MYSTICISM AND NATURAL THEOLOGY

A New Relation

Justification introduces us to a new relation to God. This is expressed in the Epistle to the Ephesians when St. Paul assures them that, being made nigh by the blood of Christ, they are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God (Eph. ii. 13, 19). The same truth is taught in the Epistle to the Romans: "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together" (Rom. viii. 15–17). Deissman points out that "Paul was availing himself of a generally intelligible figure when he utilized the term 'adoption' in the language of religion" (Quoted in Moulton & Milligan's *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* under *ὑιοθησια*). In the same work we have a form of adoption: "We agree, Heracles and his wife Isarion, on the one part, that we have given away to you, Horion, for adoption, our son, Patermonthis, aged about two years, and I, Horion, on the other part, that I have him as my own son so that the rights proceeding from succession to my inheritance shall be maintained for him."

The Significance of Adoption

Notice must be taken here of the fact that "adoption" is necessary. There is a sonship, of course, in creaturehood. There is also a sense in which those who have been brought under the influence of the gospel message have a yet further relation to God. We find in the Old Testament: "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me" (Isa. i. 2). Our Lord takes up the Old Testament message when He tells us that "many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. viii. 11, 12). There are, then, relations spoken of in Scripture which bring us near to God and Christ, and yet which fall short of the high privilege of full adoption into His family. As Dr. Moule puts it: "If you would live indeed, you must do sin to death by the Spirit, and this means, in another aspect, that you must yield yourselves to be led along by the Spirit, with that leading which

is sure to conduct you always away from self and into the will of God. You must welcome the Indweller to have His holy way with your springs of thought and will. So, and only so, will you truly answer the idea, the description 'sons of God'—that glorious term, never to be satisfied by the relation of mere creaturehood, or by that of merely exterior sanctification, mere membership in a community of men, though it be the Visible Church itself. . . . But if children, then also heirs: God's heirs, Christ's co-heirs, possessors in prospect of our Father's heaven (towards which the whole argument now gravitates), in union of interest and life with our First-born Brother, in whom lies our right. From one hand a gift, infinitely merciful and surprising, that unseen bliss will be, from another the lawful portion of the lawful child, one with the Beloved of the Father" (*Commentary on Romans, in loco*).

The suggestion, therefore, that we are all sons of God by creation, or that we are made actual sons of God by the initiatory rite of baptism, though they have both a certain countenance in the Old and New Testaments, must not be obtruded so as to obscure the deeper, the only saving truth that we become sons of God when we receive our Lord Jesus Christ. It is then we become truly co-heirs of the inheritance which He secured. It is then He presents us to the Father saying, "Behold I and the children which God hath given me" (Heb. ii. 13). It is only in union with our Lord Jesus Christ that we attain to that adoption into the family of God which provides us with "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven" for us (1 Pet. i. 4). As Peter expresses it in the context of the passage to which we have referred, God hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Pet. i. 3). Through the resurrection of Christ we, who experience this renewing power, are born again; a new hope extends before us, even the hope of an eternal inheritance. Since Christ "being raised from the dead dieth no more", those who are in Him must also inevitably share in that resurrection glory.

Strands in the New Life

The close interweaving of all the strands in our conscious experience of the saving power of Christ into the new-life pattern forms a beautiful and harmonious whole. It is the soul which is born again that is justified by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ our Lord. It is the same soul that strives after the inheritance of glory, sharing in the sufferings of Christ because it suffers reproach for His name. There is no cessation in the process. It is always presented as continuous and inevitable, and yet this process is presented to us as something that is apprehended by our consciousness and operates along the line of our affections, feelings and will. Because we have a new nature in

Christ Jesus we are receptive to the appeals that come to us from God. Those words of the gospel which formerly fell on deaf ears are now heard as a veritable call of God in our souls. That does not hinder, but rather enforces, the fact that they are calls mediated to us through all the natural avenues of our being.

A Simple Example

To take a simple example. A child can be taught to love music. At first it may be wholly insensible to the sweetness of rhythm. After a time the chords of music begin to have a meaning. Discords grate harshly on the ear, harmony is sought and, when found, it gives great pleasure. But the education proceeds along the ordinary lines of hearing and translation into conscious knowledge. The fact that music is a new-found quality to which the child soul has awakened does not destroy the process of hearing nor the gift of relating sound to sound. Once the rules of harmony are perceived, the laws of harmony determine alike all the joy in the new-found experience and all progress along the line of musical knowledge. It is not otherwise with spiritual insight. Blind eyes are opened in order that we may see, not that we may substitute a wholly new power for the gift of vision with which God has endowed us. This is the true dividing line between pure mysticism and the Christian doctrine of the illumination of the Spirit. Dr. Charles Hodge writes very truly: "The object of the inward teaching of the Spirit is to enable us to discern the truth and excellence of what is already objectively revealed in the Bible. The illumination claimed by the mystic communicates truth independently of its objective revelation. It is not intended to enable us to appreciate what we already know, but to communicate new knowledge. It would be one thing to enable a man to discern and appreciate the beauty of a work of art placed before his eyes, and quite another thing to give him the intuition of all possible forms of truth and beauty, independent of everything external. So there is a great difference between that influence which enables the soul to discern the things 'freely given to us of God' (1 Cor. ii. 12) in His Word, and the immediate revelation to the mind of all the contents of that word, or of their equivalents" (*Systematic Theology,* vol. i. p. 68).

The Religion of Feeling

It may be added that the pure Mystic does not, as a rule, contend that the apprehension of God revealed in a state of ecstasy is, in fact, a rational apprehension at all. Dr. Hodge is fully sensible of this difference. He discusses Schleiermacher's view with considerable penetration. The followers of this widely spread opinion would place the seat of religion in feeling rather than in thought. Our verbal forms are rationalizations of something which at the last defies analysis. St.

Paul's experience when he heard "unspeakable" things is regarded by them as the highest point of spiritual experience. Hence as a rule they discount creeds and any formulations of Christian dogma. The surrendered will, not the active reason, holds for them the secret of true communion with God.

Pure Mysticism and Syncretic Movements

We have used the term pure mysticism because, as in every other phase of Christian thought, there is here a good deal of syncretism. Aspects of the mystic way are incorporated into more ordinary methods of approach to God. Kuyper has a very excellent comment on some of these deviations from ordinary theology. He writes: "No one can get along without thought; without a life with consciousness no human life is conceivable; everyone goes out from certain general conceptions; and, voluntarily or otherwise, in those who live in higher spheres those general conceptions form a system; that is, they stand in a certain relation to each other. As an actual fact, therefore, the conflict against 'barren intellectualism' banishes all influence of revelation or even of religion from the development of our world of thought; while eventually the world of thought, which from natural reason has become common property, is permitted to assert itself as unassailable and self-evident. With these men it is ever the old conflict between the primacy of the consciousness and of the will, while our entire higher life is subsumed by them under the will" (*Encyclopaedia of Sacred Theology*, p. 322). Hodge reminds us that some evangelical theologians hold that "every true believer is a mystic". He directs special attention to Lange's article in the Shaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia, where it is stated "there is a mystical element in all true religion". Hodge not unnaturally prefers to declare that "different things should be designated by different words". It is this double factor that makes discussion difficult. In the examination of any particular point of view we need as far as possible to isolate the distinctive element while recognizing that in practice other features are often inextricably mixed with it.

Professor Jones's Distinction

Professor Rufus M. Jones is aware of this difficulty and also sympathetic to Hodge's criticism regarding the use of the word. He writes: "It would be conducive to clarity to restrict the word mysticism . . . as designating the historic *doctrine* of the relationship and potential union of the human soul with ultimate Reality and to use the term 'mystical experience' for direct intercourse with God. . . . Mystical experience is as old as humanity, is not confined to any one racial stock, is undoubtedly one of the original grounds of personal religion, and does not stand or fall with the truth or falsity of the metaphysically formulated doctrine of mysticism" (Hastings' *Encyclopaedia:*

"Religion and Ethics", art. "Mysticism"). This is a commonsense distinction as it stands, but it is not easy to carry it forward into all its implicates without creating the confusion it seeks to avoid.

An Attempted Solution

If we may attempt to make clear what so many have found to be obscure, we would say that, while sensible of the difficulties in any formulation, it would seem that all knowledge carries us forward to its limit. Beyond that limit we can perceive that there is existent a greater and fuller reality than knowledge can compass. That is the truth in the apparent paradox which bids us seek by knowledge Him who is above all reaches of knowledge and to know the Unknown. The error lies in the injunction to leave behind sense and intellect and all things known by sense and intellect. On the contrary, it is better to take the way of the patriarch Job: "Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?" (Job xxvi. 14). Our knowledge, even when illumined by the Holy Spirit, leads us in the direction of God only a certain way. We have to exclaim with the apostle: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out" (Rom. xi. 33). But this does not open to us another way of approach. It does not invite us to fling aside all we know. It advises us that these are still "parts of His Ways" and by the diligent use of the means He has given us we can learn enough to trust Him and see far enough to know that there stretches beyond an infinite expanse of divine wisdom and grace. Mysticism in its absolute sense bids us find the Absolute in the recesses of our own soul. The message of God's Word bids us understand what He has revealed, appreciate His message to our soul and recognize that beyond it there is still the Great Reality who has deigned to manifest Himself to us in love.

Importance of this Discussion

It may seem as if this discussion breaks in upon the sequence of thought that has so far been pursued. But the difference is so radical between the two conceptions that it is impossible to proceed without devoting some attention to it. Modernism, with its recognized looseness towards dogmatic formulae, has a very great measure of sympathy with mysticism. It tends to confuse, at least in some expositions of the subject, the sense of awe which possesses the soul when confronted with the inscrutable, with the sense of absorption into an unknown and unknowable Absolute. It seems alike more reasonable and more helpful to say with Professor Iverach: "If we take the Christian conception of God as One who can be in some measure the Known and Obeyed and Loved, we fill up the dark inscrutable back-

ground of being with the living God who has come forth to manifest Himself to us and to speak to us words we can understand, and do deeds of kindness and love" (*Is God Knowable,* p. 223). But if God so speaks and so acts within the region of the intelligible, we can no longer accept the view that we attain to a fuller comprehension of the divine by neglecting the means He Himself has employed, to reveal to us His gracious purposes for man. This is a radical problem which must be faced. The character of God must be known if we are to avoid extravagance in our higher flights of emotion. Tennyson is called a mystic by our modern word-turners, yet he wrote:

> *And so the Word had breath, and wrought*
> *With human hands the creed of creeds*
> *In loveliness of perfect deeds,*
> *More strong than all poetic thought.*
> (*In Memoriam,* xxxvi).

The creed that expresses itself in perfect deeds on earth cannot be the pale copy of Nirvana or the Epicurean ἀταραξία. Yet ultimately mysticism finds some such solution. We lose ourselves in a state where thought disappears and feeling sinks into a kind of quiescence. On the contrary, the Bible message is that God quickens our understanding, feeling and will so "that we might know the things that are freely given us of God" (1 Cor. ii. 12). And so we return to the conception which has been already propounded that while the work of the Spirit passes deep down to the roots of our personal being, its expression, when it reaches the conscious life, is governed by the laws of our nature.

Natural Theology

Indeed we would accept the dictum of Kuyper: "Natural theology is with us no schema but the knowledge of God itself, which still remains in the sinner and is still within his reach, entirely in harmony with the sense of Romans i. 19 ff. and Romans ii. 14 ff. Sin, indeed, is an absolute darkening power, and were not its effect temporarily checked nothing but absolute darkness would have remained in and about man; but *common grace* has restrained its workings to a very considerable degree; also in order that the sinner might be without excuse. In consequence of this common grace there remains the rudera or sparks of light in the sinner, and the curse upon nature has not yet come in such measure but that "invisible things" are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made (Rom. i. 20). But, and this is the point, instead of clinging fast to this, the sinner in general has played a wilful game with this fruit of common grace, and consequently his "foolish heart" has become entirely "foolishness" and "darkness". And only as a result of this abuse which the sinner has

made of natural theology, God at last has "given him over", as Paul reiterates it three times in Romans i (*Encyclopaedia,* p. 302). True theology, according to Kuyper, is the reversal of this downward tendency. "Calvin," says Kuyper, ". . . compared ectypal theology, as, thanks to common grace, it still exists in and for the sinner, to a book, the writing of which had become blurred, so that it could only be deciphered with a glass; that is, with the help of special revelation. In this figure the thought lies expressed, that the theology which reflects itself as such in our nature, is ever the real theology, which, however, must be augmented and be explained, and which, without this assistance, remains illegible, but which even during and after this help, always remains the true divine writing" (p. 309).

Revelation and Natural Theology

With this position before us it becomes at once apparent that revelation does not supersede but does illuminate the natural religious impulse. When once revelation is accepted it works according to the laws of the soul and not in a special sphere of its own where all the operations of intellect, feeling and will are rendered inoperative. The newborn and justified man receives the things of God by the powers with which he has been endowed by God.

CHAPTER IX

SANCTIFICATION

Assuming that God leads the soul by opening to it the treasures of wisdom and knowledge by the ordinary avenues of intellect, feeling and will, let us first consider this interpretation in the light of the New Testament message concerning sanctification. The word "to sanctify" has a variety of uses and a study of them may help to make clear the method of God's gracious working in the souls of those who have entered into new and saving relation with Him. Girdlestone, in his valuable work *Synonyms of the Old Testament,* writes: "The terms sanctification and holiness are now used so frequently to represent moral and spiritual qualities, that they hardly convey to the reader the idea of *position* or *relationship* as existing between God and some person or thing consecrated to Him. Yet this appears to be the real meaning of the word" (283 Ed. 1871). He points out further that in the Old Testament the word is used with reference to places (for example, Deut. xxiii. 14; Zech. ii. 12; 1 Kings ix. 3; Exod. xxviii. 38, xxix. 36), to times (for example, Gen. ii. 3; Joel i. 14), to persons (for example, Exod. xiii. 2, xxviii. 41; Deut. vii. 6). "The point involved in every case is relation or contact with God." The term is applied to God Himself (for example, Jos. xxiv. 19; Ps. cxi. 9). More remarkable, the word is used of men and women whose lives were dedicated to unholy heathen practices (for example, Gen. xxxviii. 21; Deut. xxiii. 17), and also of the fruit of a vineyard that has been defiled or forfeited (Deut. xxii. 9). In the New Testament we have the same root idea. God the Father "sanctifies" the Son; God the Son sanctifies Himself (John x. 36, xvii. 19); God the Father also "sanctifies" believers (John xvii. 17). Believers are sanctified in the blood of Christ (Heb. ix. 14, x. 10, 14). Food is sanctified (1 Tim. iv. 5). The marriage relation is sanctified through the fact that one partner is a believer (1 Cor. vii. 14) and as a result the children born of the marriage are "holy", which is the adjective from which the verb sanctify is derived. "When therefore ἅγιος was appropriated in Jewish circles to represent their special idea of holiness, it was natural that the factitive derivative should be coined from it, as a technical term which would be immediately understood by any Greek even if he had never met with the actual form" (Moulton and Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* under ἁγίαζω).

The Root Meaning of Sanctity

When, therefore, we consider all these uses in the Old and New Testament we see that the original meaning of the word was separation for a particular use generally associated with sacred idea. Even the passages, few in number, which relate the idea to unworthy ends or to judicial punishment from God do not altogether lose the idea of a thing or person being separated or set apart. In relation to God Himself the word lays stress on His exalted Majesty, conveying the idea expressed in the Epistle to the Hebrews concerning our Lord that He was "separate from sinners", though in that passage the idea is more definitely that our Lord was placed apart from sinners, put in quite a different category, whereas in the Old Testament references to the holiness of God the idea is rather that of divine remoteness as an integral feature of the divine nature. The sanctifying of the Son by the Father and His own act of sanctification indicate the placing of the Son aside for a special and sacred duty. God sanctified our Lord when He "gave" His only-begotten Son, and our Lord sanctified Himself when He set Himself apart that He might achieve the salvation of His people. There are here, as in other cases, parallel expressions which help to make clear the inner meaning of the word used. We are told that our Lord purchased for Himself a people for His own possession (Titus ii. 14). The Revised Version here follows the translation of the equivalent Hebrew word which is rendered "peculiar treasure" in our versions, both Revised and Authorized (Exod. xix. 5; Ps. cxxxv. 4). Lightfoot, who discusses the use of the word at length, says: "We may reasonably infer from the notices of Origen and Jerome that this word was unknown out of Biblical Greek" (*On a Fresh Revision of the New Testament*, p. 262). It has since been discovered in the Papyri where it has the meaning of abundance, superfluity, which fixes the sense to that which is given it in the LXX. Christ purifies us so that we belong to His personal treasures, the privy purse of a king (see Eccles. ii. 8). This at least helps us to understand the natural transition by which those who were set apart are conceived as obtaining a character of virtue. Again Paul speaks of himself as separated from his mother's womb (Gal. i. 15). The word here means "set apart" or "marked off". Here also, as in the case of the Old Testament word for sanctify, there are two usages: a good (see Rom. i. 1; Acts xiii. 2) and a bad (Luke viii. 22). It has what we may call a simple factual significance in such contexts as Gal. ii. 12; Acts xix. 9. In all such cases the exact character of the separation and the purpose of it must be gathered from the context.

There are, therefore, at least two parallel usages which throw light on the primary meaning of "to sanctify". "Our Lord purifies unto Himself a people for His own possession." It is surely admissible to see in

the dative case "unto himself" that idea of an inner relation with a personal touch of which Robertson speaks (op. cit., p. 536). Here the idea of marking out for a special purpose emerges in the thought, although the verb itself does not occur. And then we have the verb itself in the passages already cited which establish a purpose of God to "mark off" those who believe on Him and bring them into a special relation to Himself. The meaning cannot remain in doubt. The people or things that are sanctified are devoted to a special purpose.

Various Usages of the Word "Sanctity"

In most cases the word means devoted to God when applied to persons or things, but there are other usages that help us to separate the word from any such definite suggestion as would imply that "holiness" in the sense of virtue must inevitably attach to it. The accursed thing as well as the redeemed thing is devoted. Then we have the passages where God is spoken of as "holy". These cannot mean "devoted" in the sense attaching to men and things. They can mean only that God in His essential nature has that character which places Him unalterably on the side of righteousness. He is aloof from iniquity. It is because of this element in the thought that holiness and awe are so closely connected. Hence we are told: "Holy and reverend is His name." God is so remote in His exalted righteousness that it engenders fear in the heart of man who is made conscious in God's presence of his own shortcomings. Sanctification means the placing of us in a particular category as people devoted or assigned to God. We read that Jesus Christ is made sanctification unto us (1 Cor. i. 30). This new relation of devotedness can be established only in our Lord Jesus Christ and has its source in the eternal purpose of God. But although the root idea is separation to God, the assigning of a people for His own possession, we cannot divorce the word from the subject to which it refers. The altar, the gift, the daily food to which the word is applied, cannot in themselves have any moral virtue. They gain this significance by their association with the Lord of all life.

There is a degree of advance when we consider human relations to things or to states of life. We receive the injunction: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 31). The context here and in 1 Corinthians viii where the same question is discussed shows clearly that the relation is not simply between the food and the eater. There is a double relation. The eater may eat "with conscience of the idol" or he may eat looking on the idol as "nothing". There is only one God. But that does not exhaust the possibilities. Others may not have the knowledge of the well-instructed Christian. Eating in certain circumstances must be regulated by this fact. The same action may be socially right in one set of circumstances and socially wrong in another set of circumstances.

We have to take up all such actions into the scheme of our life, and we are bound to consider how far each such action in itself in different circumstances will contribute to the glory of God. Our relations to our neighbours as well as to God must determine our conduct. The highest degree of devotion which governs all the others is the response of our rational souls to the overtures of God. He marks us out for Himself. As conscious beings we recognize that such consecration initiated by God demands a suitable regard from us. "We are not our own, for we are bought with a price." That fact carries with it inevitable consequences in the heart and life of a conscious subject.

The Dual Reference in Sanctification

This dual reference of sanctification finds expression in many varied forms. The action of God in devoting our renewed being to His service finds many different types of presentation. Our Lord prays for His disciples, "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth" (John xvii. 17, R.V.). Here our sanctification is presented as an act of God the Father, and it operates in the sphere of the truth. This can mean only that God secures our devotedness to Him by making us sensible of the great message of His revelation. It is not a labour which we undertake in order to make ourselves suited for the purposes of God. It is a gracious action of God Himself by which the truth, finding entrance into our hearts, directs our conduct in the way that is well-pleasing to Him. There is a soul region where alone the full purpose of God in our lives can find expression. That soul region is the region of "the truth". Unless the mollifying influence of truth is experienced in our consciousness there is no sanctifying operation of God.

The Meaning and Value of Truth

Perhaps it may not be out of place to digress here for a few moments from the exacting duty of collating the various pieces of scriptural evidence, to reflect on the word "truth" itself and its bearing on God's work in our soul. At certain stages in the world's progress a very high premium was set on truth. It sometimes seems as if this high regard is not so much in evidence today. The scientist still holds truth and accuracy in great respect, knowing, as he does, that the whole success of his investigations depends on a close regard to the actual facts. Yet even here we sometimes detect a looseness in phraseology that ministers (no doubt without conscious intention on the part of the user) to false notions. There is a readiness to use the word evolution to cover a multitude, if not of sins, at least of poorly related facts. It is strange how in our deflected human nature one era lays store by one virtue and another era by another virtue. In the Elizabethan age very much store was set on intellectual honesty. To compromise conviction was esteemed a more deadly fault than to commit a crime of

violence. Jewel gives a rather interesting illustration of this. Writing to Peter Martyr, he records: "The bishop of London (Bonner) is in his old lodging which he formerly occupied in King Edward's time. When he was conveyed thither, and had arrived in the interior of the prison, where (being a most courteous person, and gentlemanly both in his manners and appearance) he politely saluted the prisoners who were present, and addressed them as his friends and companions; one of them immediately disclaimed this, and cried out, 'Do you take me, you brute, for a companion of yours? Go to hell, as you deserve; you will find companions there. As for me, I only slew one individual and that not without reason; while you have causelessly murdered vast numbers of holy men, martyrs of Christ, witnesses and maintainers of the truth. Besides, indeed I am sorry for what I did; while you are so hardened that I know not whether you can be brought to repentance.' I write this, that you may know in what a state he must be when even wicked and abandoned men reject and avoid him, and will not endure him in their society" (*Jewel's Works,* vol. iv, Parker Society, p. 1,237). That is not wholly lacking even now, but it was more marked in the stormy days when men were often called upon to die for their convictions. Now that we have become tolerant it is a great temptation to become indifferent. There is only a short step between saying "Everyone is entitled to his opinion" and "It does not matter what anybody's opinion is". The first is toleration, the second nonsense. But to return to our discussion.

The Greeks and Truth

The Greek philosophers recognized the great importance of truth. R. A. P. Rogers admirably sums up the Platonic doctrine when he writes: "Truth is usually conceived as the object of purely theoretical knowledge. But Plato, generalizing the Socratic doctrine, holds that the ultimate object of knowledge is the Highest Good, in the realization of which all opposition between theory and practice disappears. Now wisdom is the faculty by which we apprehend truth in this broad sense. . . . Now the lover of Wisdom does not pursue Justice alone, he seeks the truth everywhere, wherever it may be found. He looks not at the isolated appearances but at the inner essence of reality. He is never satisfied with mere opinion, which pursues only the shadow of things; he seeks and obtains knowledge, which apprehends the substance of things as they really are. It is characteristic of Plato that he regards this intellectual love of truth as the spring of moral virtue, as popularly understood" (*A Short History of Ethics,* p. 49).

The Hebrews and Truth

The conception common to the Greeks had also its roots deep in the Hebrew thought. The Hebrew word for truth is most familiar to us

in the form "Amen" which found its way into the Greek and Latin tongues. The word means that which is regarded as fixed or established, and it has close connection with believing. But the Old and New Testament attach a deeper meaning to truth than that which can be found in the Greek conception, lofty though that is: truth links itself on to the revelation of God as the unchanging One. Aristotle in his concept of Theoria, which he admits is not attainable by human nature and requires immortality for its realization, comes nearest to the Bible presentation. As Rogers put it: "The life of Theoria is the pursuit and capture of Truth in the widest sense, not merely the abstract truth of scientific propositions. Theoria is a looking into the heart of things, the absorption of the soul in reality, the fusion of subject and object" (op. cit. p. 81, note).

Hence we have in the New Testament such phrases as "the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father" (John xv. 26); "thy word is truth" (John xvii. 17); "the truth of God" (Rom. i. 25); "the truth in Christ" (Rom. ix. 1); "manifestation of the truth" (2 Cor. iv. 2); "the truth of the Gospel" (Gal. ii. 5); "we are of the truth" (1 John iii. 19). When all those passages are considered carefully we see that they bear consistent witness to the fact that the revelation of God in Christ, the gospel, is pre-eminently the message of truth. It is so because it is the unfolding to us of Him who is the Truth. There can be no serious apprehension of divine things until we are of the truth, and that experience becomes ours when we are brought forth by the will of God into the new life which is mediated to us by the message of the gospel (Jas. i. 18). God by His Word designates us for His inheritance. It is an act of the divine working upon the soul, but the assurance that the work has truly begun is given us when we receive the Word which is the word of truth. There is, therefore, abundant witness to the divine side of this all-important fact.

The Dark Side

The other darker side is made equally manifest. There are those who receive the message of God with their outward ear and remain unresponsive. Such men "hold down the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. i. 18, R.V.). The margin supports the Authorized Version and reads "who hold the truth". This is the usage of the word in modern Greek, as Robertson advises us (op. cit., p. 139), where he says that the word in modern Greek means "I know". Either interpretation suits the idea that possession of the truth invites wrath unless it issues in righteousness. The Authorized Version can be read in connection with Romans i. 32: "who knowing the ordinance of God, that they which practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practice them" (R.V.). Such persons were in possession of the decisions of God but were impervious to their

meaning. Those who support the Revised Version text can refer to the Received text in John v. 4, where the man who stepped into the pool was made whole of the disease which held him in bondage or hindered him. But whichever view is taken, the external possession of truth is not the sanctifying medium. The opposing Jew had the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law (Rom. ii. 20). Yet the name of God was blasphemed because of him (Rom. ii. 24). Those that perish receive not the love of the truth (2 Thess. ii. 10). Some are ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (2 Tim. iii. 7). It is by means of the Spirit we obey the truth (1 Pet. i. 22).

The Experiential Side

And so we come to the human, experiential side of sanctification. The truth is operative. It results in belief and in obedience, and these actions are similar in Christian experience to what they are in ordinary experience. The truth which is clearly identified with the revealed gospel awakens in the soul a direct response. The reason for the awakening is that He who is the Truth opens our understanding that we may understand the Scripture (Luke xxiv. 45). Notice here that the Revised Version translates more closely the Greek text and tells us our Lord opened the mind of the disciples. Further, the word "opened" is used absolutely in other passages to connote explanation of the meaning (Acts. xvi. 14, xvii. 3). The truth then finds entrance into the mind by the ordinary process of explanation. When it finds entrance and is believed the hearer is sanctified; that is, appointed to be a true servant of Christ our Lord, with the consciousness of what that implies. The soul is "in the truth"; that is, moves in it as its congenial field.

This important factor in the new life is given in another form when St. Paul congratulates Timothy on the fact that from infancy he has "known the holy scriptures" (2 Tim. iii. 15). If we are to avoid error we must be diligent students of the Scripture, paying attention not only to the words but to the evident meaning (Matt. xxii. 29). Apollos, notwithstanding his limited knowledge at first, was "mighty in the Scriptures" (Acts xviii. 24). "We through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. xv. 4). The neglect of the study of the Scripture means the neglect of one of the most potent influences employed by God to set us apart as holy unto Himself. We are warned in the parable of the sower, that disaster comes when the Word is snatched away before it has time to sink in, or when it has no good soil in which to germinate effectively, or when thorns spring up and choke it. Two things are essential for the harvest—a prepared soil and suitable seed. The preparation of the heart in man and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord (Prov. xvi. 1). This may mean on one interpretation that man plans in his heart and God supplies the right form of speech to bring man's plans to fruition. But the prophet speaks

constantly of God giving his people a heart to seek after Him, of making them of one heart and one mind (Isa. li. 7; Jer. xxiv. 7. xxxii. 39; Ezek. xi. 19, xxxvi. 26). "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. cxix. 11). Because of the importance of this work of God the prayer ascends: "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies" (Ps. cxix. 36). This does not mean "give me an emotional stimulus" but "give me a clear understanding and a ready will to obey". Once we are impressed with the inner reality of the message of God we bend our mental energies to the task of discovering the rich treasures hidden for us in the sacred pages.

A Modern Evil

This is not a Bible-loving age, and we see on every hand the evil effects of neglect of God's Word. If we are to make full use of the quickened apprehension wrought in our mind and soul by the living Spirit we must be found in the number of those who are doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving our own selves (Jas. i. 22 ff.). James has a very striking simile. A man who beholds himself in a glass forgets what manner of man he is, but a man who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein, who is not a forgetful hearer but a doer that worketh, shall be blessed in his deed.

Sanctification and the Holy Spirit

To revert to another aspect of this double operation, the divine and the human side in God's dealings with men, we find a set of passages that attribute sanctification directly to the Spirit of God. Our sanctification is said to be of the Spirit (1 Pet. i. 2; 2 Thess. ii. 13). This may be compared with "the righteousness of God" as we find it in Romans i. 17, iii. 5, 21, and is open to the same difference of interpretation. Does it mean the sanctification possessed by the Holy Spirit similar to the passages which speak of God sanctifying Himself (Ezek. xxxvi. 23, xxxviii. 23)? The meaning there seems to be that God will manifest His own character and power so that men will recognize that He is worthy of praise and honour and greatly to be feared. Are we to conclude that sanctification of the Spirit means that the work of the Spirit in the life and character of the children of God manifests His real nature and character to those who observe His work? Or does it mean a sanctification produced by the Spirit proceeding from Him as its Source but manifested in the changed character of men—a designation of man occasioned by His power and approved by Him?

The Use of the Genitive

We must be on our guard against trying to get the whole meaning from the use of the genitive. The genitive, indeed, specifies, but it is only when we relate it to the context that we get the full explanation

of its meaning. If we take the simplest meaning the texts quoted speaks of a Spirit sanctification. The aim of the writer is to distinguish that "devotion" or "designation" of which he speaks from other devotions by attaching it to the idea of God and the Holy Ghost. It would, of course, be absurd to interpret Matthew xii. 31, where the same form occurs, as the blasphemy which exhibits the nature of the Holy Spirit or even, repellent thought, the blasphemy produced by the Holy Spirit. It means quite plainly a blasphemy which was "of" the Spirit because the Spirit was the object of the blasphemy. The meaning is made quite clear in Mark iii. 29, where the preposition εἰς is inserted showing clearly that the blasphemy had reference to the Holy Spirit—was directed to Him as its object. We conclude, therefore, that the words "sanctification of the Spirit" means such an experience as has direct relation to the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is the divine Agent of sanctification, as God the Father is the divine Author.

But the means of sanctification are also given in 2 Thessalonians ii. 13. God chose us from the beginning in sanctification of the Spirit and in belief of the truth, whereunto He called us "by means of" the gospel. St. Paul states that the gospel is his gospel, meaning no doubt that he was put in trust with it (see 1 Thess. i. 5, ii. 4). We step from the creative energy of the God of all grace to the means which He employs, "the gospel", and we further learn that the means become effective because of faith in the truth. The message of God to man, not the reflections of man concerning God, are alone "the truth". The Greek idea of an approach from man to God through Theoria gives place to the gospel idea of an approach from God to man through the revelation in Christ Jesus. Just because God so approaches us and the Holy Spirit is the divine Agent in revelation, the ensuing sanctification is at once "of the Spirit" and "in faith of the truth". This transition from the divine purpose to the divinely appointed medium of sanctification is important.

CHAPTER X

TWO STRANDS IN TEACHING ON SANCTIFICATION

Two Strands of Thought

When we read the New Testament we find two strands of thought regarding sanctification. Dr. Moule expresses the difference thus: "Undoubtedly the promises and offers of Scripture are magnificently large (see, for example, Eph. iii. 20, 21; Col. i. 10; 1 John ii. 5, iii. 6, 9). And the New Testament obviously contemplates the Christian life as a life meant to be, *not intermittently, but normally* a 'walk with God'. . . . But then Scripture has another side of hint and caution. While spreading before us the animating truth of the divine perfectness of grace, of God working in us, it intimates the humbling *imperfection of our receptivity* while as yet the redemption of our being from the effects of the Fall awaits actual completion (Rom. viii. 23). Here seems to lie the root of the mystery, and fact of the spiritual antitheses of Scripture as regards sanctification (see, for example, Ps. xvii. 3 contrasted with cxliii. 2; Jas iii. 2 with Jude 24 in the Greek; 1 Pet. iv. 18 with 2 Pet. i. 11; 1 John i. 8 with iii. 6, 9). From the side of grace and gift, all is perfect, and the realization is to be indefinitely better and more delightful. From the side of the Christian there is imperfect receptivity, and accordingly imperfect holiness, to the end of his pilgrimage. So to the last he is to join, with profound sincerity, in the prayer, 'Forgive us our trespasses', and to reflect on his abiding need that 'the (propitiatory) blood of Jesus Christ should cleanse him from all sin', in a process continuous and therefore not completed" (*Outlines of Christian Doctrine*, pp. 194–5). For the guidance of the English reader it may be advisable to note that the reference to the Greek of James iii. 2 and Jude 24 is caused by the fact that in James iii. 2 the Greek verb for "stumbling" is used in the present indicative and the affirmation is made: we, all of us, stumble in many things; or taking the "many" as an adverb it would read "oftentimes". In Jude we have the participle and must read, "who is able to guard ('you' or 'them') unstumbling" or without falling. The Greek is very emphatic and suggests that God will guard those who are in an unfallen condition and keep them so. The Vulgate renders "without sin", which is an interpretation of the participle "unfallen". There can be no doubt as to the double reference and the apparent contradictions.

The explanation offered by Dr. Moule may, perhaps, be further supplemented by pointing out that very often when the divine viewpoint is taken in Scripture the final result is given prominence and the

process towards it sinks into the background. We have an example of this in Romans viii. 30, where the whole process from the call to the glorification is set before us in the same tense. As Dr. Moule puts it: "In this passage we are placed, as it were, upon the mountain of the Throne; our finite thought is allowed to speak for once (however little it understands it) the language of eternity, to utter the facts as the Eternal sees them. To Him, the pilgrim is already in the immortal country; the bond servant is already at his day's end receiving his Master's 'Well done, good and faithful'. . . . So for us, in wonderful paradox our glorification is presented, as truly as our call, in terms of accomplished fact" (*Commentary on Romans, in loco*). Yet the apostle can equally describe the believer as "groaning", waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body (Rom. viii. 22), and that in the immediate context of what Dr. Moule calls "this marvellous past". This very groaning, and the intercession of the Spirit for us, is taken up into the wide purpose of God as part of the great movement which must secure a final good to them who love God. Therefore the end of the process is regarded as a *fait accompli*.

First Peter and First John

The passage in 1 Peter iv. 18 does not present as great a difficulty. The thought there is that judgment falls even on the subjects of God's favour and therefore the lot of the ungodly must be perilous in the extreme. It is easy to see that, notwithstanding this exercise of judgment, which shows the difficulty of securing salvation, God can minister to us an abundant entrance into His heavenly kingdom. But the problem again becomes acute when the parallel passages in the First Epistle of John are considered with close attention. Here St. John states emphatically: "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves." That he included true believers in this comprehensive statement can be readily concluded from his further message: "And if any man sin, we have an advocate." This statement evidently contemplates at least the possibility of sin in the believer. Further, of those who walk in the light, it is stated: "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Yet we read that "whosoever abideth in him sinneth not" and "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin". There have been many suggestions as to the meaning. On the whole we think that Alford most nearly expresses the way of reconciling these texts. He draws attention to the general character of the epistle. Light and darkness, Christ and Antichrist, sin and holiness, love and hate are placed in strong contrast. The unalterable and opposed character of each is set in bold relief. The new birth is of God and must display the character of God. Alford quotes with approval Augustine and Bede: "In so far as he abides in Him in so far he does not sin." He continues: "The two are incompatible: and in so far as

a man is found in the one he is thereby separated from the other. . . . If the child of God falls into sin, it is an act against nature, deadly to life, hardly endured, and bringing bitter repentance; it is as the taking of a poison, which if it be not corrected by its antidote, will sap the very springs of life." Alford also quotes Dusterdieck to the effect that "The principle announced by St. John continually so to speak floats above the actual life of believers as their rule and aim, and that, in so far, the apostle's saying finds in such actual life only a relative fulfilment". He continues: "None, however, of all the expositors, who in any way has recognized the ideal character of St. John's view, has overlooked the fact, that even in the actual life of all that are born of God there is something which in full verity answers to the ideal words 'they cannot sin'. The children of God, in whom the divine seed of their eternal life abides, have, in reality, a holy privilege, as Steinhofer says, they sin not, and they cannot sin, just in proportion as the new divine life, unconditionally opposed to all sin, and manifesting itself in godlike righteousness, is present and abides in them" (Alford's *Greek Testament, in loco*).

The Same Method in Paul

It may be helpful to point out that this method of dealing with a principle in the abstract apart from modifying conditions is not confined in the New Testament to this argument of St. John. We find St. Paul employing it when discussing the nature of love in 1 Corinthians xiii. "Love," says Paul, "is not provoked." We read in Acts xvii. 16 that Paul's spirit was provoked at Athens. We read in 2 Corinthians xi. 11: "Wherefore? because I love you not? God knoweth." Are we to say that Paul, who was provoked at Athens, and, if this be referred to a righteous irritation of spirit, had a sharp contention with Barnabas, could not love the Corinthians because "Love is not provoked" and Paul certainly was? Is it not truer alike to the facts of life and the facts of Scripture to say that Paul had indeed the principle of love in his soul, though other warring impulses gained at times a temporary victory over it? If we find it possible so to reconcile the actual facts of Paul's life with his masterly presentation of the inner and real character of love we can find it possible to reconcile St. John's confession that we deceive ourselves if we say we have no sin, with his powerful presentation of the principle of the new life in Christ, which is resolutely antagonistic to sin even if the abiding evil of the flesh at times overbears the antagonism to evil that must exist in those who are born of God. It is important to notice that when we take this interpretation we have the support of cautionary statements both in the immediate context and in other passages of Scripture (for example, 1 John i. 8, iii. 2, 20, 21, v. 16, 17; 2 Pet. iii. 14, 17; Jude 20–8).

Biographical Illustrations

We have also biographical records that should have careful consideration. We have referred to the dispute between Paul and Barnabas (Acts xv. 39). There is the dispute between Paul and Peter (Gal. ii. 11) which so disturbed Jerome that he resorted to the desperate expedient of suggesting that it was stage-managed to impress the Galatians (*Commentary, in loco*). This was too much for the robust common sense of Augustine, who wrote in criticism: "If indeed statements have been admitted to the Holy Scriptures which are as it were courteous untruths, what remains in them of authority?" He cites the explicit statement: "I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel", and asks: "If he lied there where did he speak the truth?" (*Letters*, 40, 3. See also 82, 4 and 5). Jerome was evidently impressed, for he wrote afterwards: "Did not the same Paul resist Peter to the face because he did not keep step in the Gospel" (*Apol. Ruf.*, iii, 2). Augustine refers to this change of mind (*Letters*, 180, 5).

Danger from Early Habits

This case of Peter is remarkable, as it illustrates the danger arising from early habits. Peter had been trained to regard the Jewish customs as binding. He hesitated long about the question of the relation of the gospel to the Gentiles. A vision from God and his subsequent visit to Cornelius threw him on the side of the more liberal school to which Paul had come by conviction. But when pressure was brought to bear on him he fell back and compromised. The exact date of the dispute is a matter of controversy (see Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller*, etc., pp. 162–6, where both views are summarized). The facts, however, are clear: Peter receded from a true position and weakly yielded to the demands of those who were not "walking uprightly". If Peter the outspoken was tempted because of the relics of former habits of thought, the warning cannot be lost upon any of us.

Ramsay's View

Ramsay is probably right in pointing out that Peter, since his denial of his Lord, had the stabilizing influence of Pentecost and could not engage in what he calls "meaningless tergiversation". It is not necessary to maintain that all spiritual influences had wholly perished. But he fell from the full height of gospel freedom and temporized where he should have been adamant. So did Barnabas, but apparently in a lesser degree. Paul himself, in one of his interesting autobiographical touches, tells us: "I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified" (1 Cor. iv. 4), as if to warn us that even when the prize for which he earnestly strove—"to have a conscience void of offence toward God and man alway" (Acts xxiv. 16, R.V.)—was within his grasp, there

was something further needed before he could be assured of complete integrity. He had to endure the exacting scrutiny of God Himself. It is only when each man has his praise from God that we can be quite sure of the relation of motive to act. Then all the complexities which determine our conduct will be fully unravelled.

Two Sets of Consideration

We need to carry all these considerations with us when we come to study the exact teaching of Scripture on the problem of Christian victory. There are the rich promises of God that guarantee to us final triumph in the long conflict with evil. There are the assertions that in the view of God Himself we are esteemed as being more than conquerors. There are the declarations that such victory is wrought in us or achieved through us by the power of the Holy Ghost. There is the confident declaration that our faith is the victory that overcometh the world. Whatever else these "exceeding great and precious promises" involve, they certainly indicate that there must be victory in the Christian life if there is any Christian life at all. While there are plain statements that Christians vary in the measure of their appropriation of God's benefits and in the extent of their fruitfulness, we are nowhere encouraged to imagine that there may be true believers who are indistinguishable from the world. The idea that regeneration can take place and leave the subject of it in the old "gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity" is utterly foreign to New Testament teaching. Our Lord's words still echo in our heart: "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them"; "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit" (Matt. vii. 16–20). The dominant bent of the regenerate soul is towards God: "Old things have become new." This is the underlying message of James iii. 1–18, and of 1 John 1–21. We must never allow ourselves to entertain the flattering thought that we are God's children even though we serve the devil.

Backsliding and Assurance

Much that is now called backsliding labours under the disadvantage that there was nothing from which to slide back. It is therefore wiser for the backslider to seek peace by believing as at the beginning. When we link up again with our old experience of faith and love we can better appreciate the fact that our fall was from grace. As long as we continue harbouring known sin there ought to be no such assurance. Hence the Psalmist cries: "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." It is only to be expected that Satan, who appears as an angel of light, should seek to counterfeit the most precious gift of confident assurance in God's pardoning love. The mark of falsity is discoverable in every form of assurance that leads us to buoy ourselves up with the hope that God has accepted us even though we

wilfully, unrepentantly, dishonour His holy name. This does not exclude advance or even ordinary crises in our spiritual experience, but it does exclude the vain confidence which is censured in the words: "They profess that they know God; but by their works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus i. 16, R.V.). The very strength of the language emphasizes the gravity of the danger. The mind and conscience are defiled by such vain boasting.

Complete Sanctification

And yet, on the other hand, we are as strongly warned against the counter-assumption that because the child of God is a new creation therefore the complete work of grace has been or can be so accomplished in him while yet his body remains unredeemed, and that the last vestiges of sin have been eradicated. Many would earnestly repudiate the idea of eradication, however, who still claim that a stage of complete victory over sin can be attained and maintained in this life in which the believer is "wholly sanctified". They would assert that in such a condition the prayer "Forgive us our trespasses" is no longer appropriate. Some, but not all, of those who take this view fall back upon the theory that Matthew's gospel is "a transition gospel intended only for Jews and containing Christ's offer of a kingdom for Israel, which, being rejected, the gospel is held in suspense as it were until 'all Israel shall be saved' and the Messianic kingdom will be set up on earth." Mr. Rowland V. Bingham, who once adopted these views and then rejected them, has some useful comments on this point. He writes: "Think of Peter saying to John, 'He does not mean us to use that pattern prayer now. It does not apply to us.' Or think of Matthew saying to Mark, 'We mustn't pass this pattern prayer on to our young converts, because it really doesn't apply to them'" (*Matthew the Publican,* p. 62, note).

Schofield and Bingham on This Point

This view has been widely popularized by a note in Schofield's Bible on the words, "as we forgive our debtors". Schofield writes: "This is legal ground, cf. Ephesians iv. 32, which is grace. Under law forgiveness is conditioned upon a like spirit in us: under grace we are forgiven for Christ's sake, and exhorted to forgive because we have been forgiven, see Matthew xviii. 32, xxvi. 28, note" (*Schofield Bible, in loco*). We confess we are more impressed with Bingham's rather forceful words: "Our Lord is not dealing with hair-splitting theological theories of law and grace, but with the eternal principles of truth. They who talk of the grace of God to them, and will not manifest the grace of God to men, are deceiving themselves if they think that they dwell in safety. Their faith is vain! No man can truly appropriate grace from

God without showing grace to man. Christ in His pattern prayer commits His followers to that daily attitude of forgiveness to man that they may receive the daily forgiveness of God" (op. cit., p. 63). If we are to take Schofield quite literally we find ourselves in great difficulties. He cites Ephesians iv. 32 as the evidence of the new law of grace. But that text says: "even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Now in the note which he appends to Matthew xxvi. 28, he tells us: "Human forgiveness means the remission of penalty. In the Old Testament and the New, in type and fulfilment, the divine forgiveness follows the execution of the penalty." Therefore if we are to forgive, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us, we should forgive after the execution of the penalty, which does not seem to make sense. The mistake arises from confusing the ground of forgiveness with the fact of forgiveness. The love of God provided the ground of forgiveness. When we know that, we should have the same desire to pardon offences against us. Sometimes in human affairs we have to demand restitution or satisfaction. We cannot forgive a debt if the debtor is merely unwilling to pay. We can forgive when the debtor is unable to pay. If the Spirit of God is in us we will long to be able to forgive even as God desires mercy and not sacrifice. This also is a truth of the old covenant. We conclude that the prayer is applicable to us in this dispensation, and its inclusion in the form of prayer given by our Lord to His disciples invests it with a character of universality. We cannot get beyond it in this life.

Sanctification "Perfect in Parts, Imperfect in Degrees"

Nor are we confined to one passage of Scripture only when we conceive that the process of sanctification (as Kuyper credits the older theologians with stating) is "perfect in parts, imperfect in degrees" (*The Work of the Holy Spirit*, chap. x, p. 468). Dr. Moule pointed out in the passage already quoted, that St. Paul speaks of the believer as "groaning", waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body (Rom. viii. 22, 23). The word "first-fruits" here seems to indicate that the full harvest lies in the future. If we regard the genitive as a genitive of apposition or definition, the most probable interpretation is to read: "We have in our persons the beginning of that fruit which properly issues from the activity of the Spirit and we wait for the richer fruition in the redemption of our bodies", or as Dr. Moule puts it: ". . . possessors of that presence of the Holy One in them now, which is the sure pledge of His eternal fullness yet to come. . . . Yet are groaning, burthened still with mortal conditions pregnant of temptations, lying not around us only but deep within." Again, in writing to the Corinthians, Paul uttered the warning: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. x. 12). The possibility of a lapse into sin is ever present, but the day will come when

we shall no more find any reason within us or without us that might lead us away from the perfect service of our Lord. That day is not yet. Our knowledge is as yet imperfect. One day that which is perfect will come (1 Cor. xiii. 9–13). The idea mooted in Romans viii is expanded in 1 Corinthians xv, where there is the wonderful description of the resurrection body. We are still sharers in the body given us from Adam, and only when the Lord calls us from our perishable condition shall we fully realize the sanctification prepared for us in God's purpose. Again, the same thought is given us in the words: "For indeed we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but that we would be clothed upon, that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. v. 4, R.V.). The word "burdened" which Paul uses here was familiar to his readers as implying a mental weight which pressed upon the spirit. It is used also of financial pressure, heavy imports, etc. His readers could scarcely fail to draw the conclusion that, notwithstanding the sure hope of a building of God, there was a measure of hindrance to their spiritual activity so long as they remained in their earthly tabernacles.

The Use of the Word Flesh

There is given to us also in a later chapter (x. 3) the idea of "walking in the flesh", which is used somewhat differently in the Epistle to the Galatians. In 2 Corinthians Paul distinguishes "walking in the flesh" from "walking according to the flesh". Obviously the distinction here made is that, though still compassed with our earthly body and all the association it involves, there is another principle of conduct which prevents us from "warring according to the flesh". There is, then, a duality in experience, which led some of Paul's opponents to charge upon him worldly motives and the acceptance of worldly aims. Paul denies this and claims that he had recourse to weapons which are not of the flesh. In Galatians he pursues the analogy further and contrasts walking in the Spirit with walking in the flesh. He elaborates the idea by writing: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other; that ye may not do the things that ye would" (Gal. v. 17, R.V.).

Lightfoot

In this passage the word "that", according to Lightfoot, is parallel to the use in 1 Thessalonians v. 4 and means the result of the Spirit lusting against the flesh is that you may not do the things that you would. Here is a plain case of a contrary impulse held in check by the action of the Spirit. There is resident, then, in the believer a movement which if unchecked would result in evil. It is very remarkable that "the things that ye would" are here related to the lusts of the flesh.

Alford and Huxtable

Alford, in comparing and contrasting this verse with Romans vii. 15–20, writes: "It is true that 'to will' there (in Rom. vii) applies only to one side, the better will, striving after good: whereas here it must be taken 'sensu communi' for 'will' in general to whichever way inclined. So that our verse requires expansion both in the direction of Romans vii. 15–20 and in the other direction: 'The evil which I will (after the natural man) I do not do, but the good I do not will this I do' to make it logically complete" (*Greek Testament, in loco*). Prebendary Huxtable does not accept the view of Lightfoot given above, but holds rather to that suggested by Alford. He writes: "Will whatever you may whether good or evil, you will be sure to meet with an adverse agency, striving to bar the complete accomplishment of your desire." He adds: "With every Christian, to the very last, the life of holiness can only be a fruit of *conflict*: a conflict on the whole, even perhaps persistently successful, yet a conflict still maintained by the help of the Spirit against an evil principle which can never, as long as we live, cease to give occasion for care and watchfulness (see 1 Cor. ix. 24–7; 1 Tim. vi. 12; 2 Tim. iv. 7" (*Pulpit Commentary, in loco*). On either interpretation of the text there is apparent a conflict of will: "Ye cannot do the things that ye would"; and this conflict is attributed to the awakening of two impulses, one proceeding from the flesh and the other due to the Spirit of God. It must be noted that the Pauline injunction is "Walk in the Spirit", and that he does not suggest that such a walk will abolish the lusting of the flesh. It will render it inoperative. "Ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." The message in Ephesians iv. 22, 32, is not inconsistent with his idea, but rather lends it support by the recognition that a certain course of action might grieve the Holy Spirit, and by the later declaration (Eph. v. 8) that we walk as children of light through the fruit of Spirit. There is a similar idea in Philippians ii. 12, 13. The injunction in Colossians is to "mortify your members which are upon the earth" (Col. iii. 5). There is a difficult passage in James iv. 5, which Mayor paraphrases: ". . . as Scripture says, 'The Spirit which He has planted in us jealously longs for our love. It is owing to this jealous affection that He resists the proud and gives grace to the humble'." He comments: "It is really a parable in which the soul is represented as standing between rival wooers, God and the world. The strongest human passion is boldly taken to represent the divine longing for the entire possession of the human heart; that is, for the expulsion of every thought and feeling which interferes with the recovery of the divine image in man and the attainment of the perfect ideal of humanity" (*Epistle of St. James,* pp. 209, 211). Others, as the Revised Version, regard it as a question which demands a negative answer. Mayor is emphatic that his view is the

only one "which is alike in harmony with the context and permissible according to the usage of the Greek language" (p. 132). We are familiar with these strong assertions of scholars and tend to suspect that, like the lady in *Hamlet,* occasionally they "protest too much". But whatever view is taken of the text, we are here presented with the same idea as in Galatians. The indwelling Spirit longeth and hence produces in our hearts a different impulse from that which would otherwise be awakened. There may be other passages which are pertinent, but with all these before us, however much interpretation may vary in detail, we can hardly escape the conclusion that the sanctification of God as produced through His will by the Holy Spirit is an internal operation whereby the new desires are strengthened and brought to expression and whereby the old desires of the flesh and of the mind are corrected and caused to die ere they emerge into action. There is no suggestion that these old desires cannot rise again.

The Limits of Sanctification Here

We are in the flesh even when we do not walk according to the flesh. Once, indeed, in Romans viii, the contrast is presented of being "in flesh" on the one hand or "in Spirit" on the other, but the context makes it abundantly clear that the thought is: "You do not move or act normally in the sphere of the flesh but in the sphere of the Spirit." This is made clear by the following clauses which hold out the prospect of our as yet unredeemed body experiencing the "quickening" which had already taken place in our spirit. Paul asks us to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. Yet he does not hesitate to assert that the same body "is dead because of sin", in contrast to the Spirit, which "is life because of righteousness" (Rom. viii. 10). Similarly Paul speaks of knowing Christ or the possibility of knowing Christ according to the flesh (2 Cor. v. 16), which must have a slightly different connotation from walking according to the flesh and a still more marked difference from his words: "They that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. viii. 8). The knowing of Christ after, or according to, the flesh means simply having a natural human knowledge of Him. Knowing a man after the flesh also means never rising above the external phenomena, never penetrating to the deeper consciousness that man is destined to have special relations with God. These varying uses warn us that we must always pay close attention to the context. They do not destroy reasonable inferences soundly based on the context. The *one word, one meaning* form of interpretation would play havoc with any language. So, for that matter, would the *many words, many meanings* form of interpretation. We cannot escape from the obligation of considering the context.

Kuyper on 1 Corinthians i. 30 and Hooker on Sanctification

Kuyper makes a very subtle distinction in 1 Corinthians i. 30. He points out that the words used there are "righteousness" and then a form signifying not the possession of holiness but holy-making: ἁγιασμός, not ἁγιοσύνε. Kuyper writes: "Since the justification of the ungodly is at once finished, and the sanctification of the regenerate proceeds but slowly and gradually, St. Paul writes to the Corinthians with perfect precision that Christ is, to him and them, no more righteous *making* but righteous*ness*. On the contrary, ye had not yet become holi*ness*, but only holy-*making*. . . . The personal sanctification of the regenerated and converted sinner begins after the quickening of faith: continues with more or less interruption all the days of his life: is finished, so far as the soul is concerned, in death, and, regarding the body, at the coming of the Lord. And since this is wrought by Christ, through the Holy Spirit, the Scripture confesses that Christ is not only our Righteousness but also our Sanctification" (*The Work of the Holy Spirit*, pp. 453–5). The distinction may appear to be subtle, but there is nothing in the use of the word in the New Testament that compels us to reject it as even improbable (see Alford and Ellicott on 1 Thess. iv. 3). The task of treading our way through all the wealth of references may prove a little laborious, but any toil expended is more than repaid by the rich provision which is opened for us as part of the great purpose of God. It is His divine will not only to accept us in the Beloved but to conform us to the image of His Son. We believe that a study of the New Testament justifies Hooker in stating: "The righteousness, wherewith we shall be clothed in the world to come, is both perfect and inherent. The righteousness whereby here we are justified, is perfect but not inherent. That whereby we are sanctified, inherent but not perfect" (Keble's Works, vol. iii, Sermon II, par. 3, p. 486). Hooker goes on to point out: "If we have indeed our fruit in holiness, notwithstanding we must note, that the more we abound therein, the more need we have to crave that we be strengthened and supported. Our very virtues may be snares unto us. The enemy that waiteth for all occasions to work our ruin, hath ever found it harder to overthrow an humble sinner, than a proud saint. There is no man's case so dangerous as his, whom Satan hath persuaded that his own righteousness shall present him pure and blameless in the sight of God" (op. cit., p. 492). Hooker in the same sermon helps us to understand the difference between sanctification and good works. He writes: "That whereof it consisteth, whereof it is really and formally made, are those infused virtues proper and particular unto saints, which the Spirit, in that very moment when first it is given of God, bringeth with it: the effects thereof are such actions as the apostle doth call the fruits, the works, the operation of the Spirit: the

difference of which operations from the root whereof they spring, maketh it needful to put two kinds likewise of sanctifying righteousness, Habitual and Actual. Habitual, that holiness, wherewith our souls are inwardly indued, the same instant when first we begin to be temples of the Holy Ghost; Actual, that holiness which afterwards beautifieth all the parts and actions of our life, the holiness for which Enoch, Job, Zachary, Elizabeth and other saints are in Scriptures so highly commended. If here it be demanded, which of these do we first receive, I answer that the Spirit, the virtues of the Spirit, the habitual justice, which is engrafted, the external justice of Christ Jesus, which is imputed, these we receive all at one and the same time; whensoever we have any of these, we have all; they go together. Yet sith no man is justified except he believes, and no man believeth except he have faith, and no man hath faith unless he have received the Spirit of adoption, forasmuch as these do necessarily infer justification, but justification doth of necessity presuppose them; we must needs hold that imputed righteousness, in dignity being the chiefest, is notwithstanding in order the last of all these, but actual righteousness, which is the righteousness of good works succeedeth all, followeth after all, both in order and in time" (op. cit., p. 508).

A Closer Definition

Some writers are a little more definite than Hooker, and restrict sanctification to the inner enduement of power, creating new desires and stimulating them when created. In this association good wishes would be esteemed as the result of sanctification, although, of course, an inevitable result. It is perhaps along this line, considering sanctification in one aspect as an act of God working in or on the soul and involving the whole personality and in another aspect as the effect of such a work of God in the actual doing of that which is well pleasing, that we may get the best insight into the two manners of presentation of actual sanctification in the sacred Scripture. St. John assures us that "he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous" (1 John iii. 7).

Not only does St. James warn us against being hearers only, but St. Paul distinctly declares: "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified" (Rom. ii. 13). To such verses may be added the injunctions to mortify our members which are on the earth (Col. iii. 5), to yield our members as servants of righteousness unto God (Rom. vi. 13), to resist, steadfast in the faith (1 Pet. v. 9), to watch and pray, to endure to the end, and a multitude of similar exhortations that place the high goal of endeavour before us and exhort us, as St. Paul set himself to do, "to strive toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 14). Then, on the other hand, there are many passages which

attribute sanctification wholly to God, as "Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. v. 18); "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him" (Col. ii. 6) (where the interpretation is given: receive or walk by an act of confiding faith); "he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God" (1 Thess. iii. 13); "We . . . receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Gal. iii. 14). If it is faith that secures the gift of the Spirit, then it is of grace (Rom. iv. 16); and if it is of grace, it is no more of works (Rom. xi. 6).

CHAPTER XI

SANCTIFICATION, QUIETISM AND CRISIS

"The Rest of Faith"

Having regard to the many statements in God's Word which attribute sanctification wholly to God, realized through the means of faith, a great deal is made in certain hymns of consecration of "the rest of faith". The seeker is urged to give up striving and to take the Holy Spirit by faith in exactly the same way as He received the Lord Jesus Christ for justification. Faith is placed over against works, and the striving and straining after holiness is condemned out of hand. Two somewhat contrary movements have grown up in the various churches, and emphasis is laid on one or other of these selected passages of Scripture. Those who attach themselves to the strong asseverations that righteousness must appear in the daily life have laid an ever-increasing stress upon the activity of the soul. They have more and more inclined towards the view that while we need the enabling grace of God to act according to His will, that grace is offered to us and must be accepted and appropriated and then translated into action by our own efforts. We become holy according as we use the means of grace, and hence there is a continual struggle with our rebellious nature in order to bring it into the obedience of Christ.

Strong support for this view is found in such passages as: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away" (1 Cor. ix. 27), and "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (Heb. iv. 11; cf. vi. 9–12, xii. 15–17).

Pietism

The truth in this view is obvious, but just now we wish to point out that an over-emphasis has led to what some call pietism. The name may not be very well chosen. It has close connection with the movement of Spener and Francke in Germany, which was largely a protest against the rigid, and also frigid, Lutheranism that prevailed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But by regarding only one side of that movement many theologians have come to identify pietism with what others call "practical Christianity", and to represent it as a form of teaching that lays little emphasis on Christian dogma and throws all its weight on the side of exemplary living. This in turn has taken more than one aspect. There is a vast difference between Spener and

Francke on the one hand and Toland and Matthew Tindal on the other. Locke may perhaps be said to come between the two. Still it is evident that there is a grave danger that exclusive regard to the ethic of the New Testament may foster the opinion that the teaching of Jesus differs in degree but not in kind from the teaching of all the great moralists, and so the concept of a divine revelation may be weakened correspondingly. We get a religion of all sensible men, and no sensible man tells what it is. The Roman Church, with its mingling of ideas of justification and sanctification and its teaching on the debilitated, but still active purely human will, has pressed the doctrine of human merit to its fullest extent and exposed itself to a charge of semi-Pelagianism. Man's struggle takes its place in the foreground, and the work of the divine Spirit is regarded as something in the light of an added stimulus to our human aspirations.

Quietism

On the other hand those who have rested on the counter passages which emphasize a receptivity on our part and ascribe all activity to the gracious work of the Spirit, have been prone to adopt views which have been called, perhaps not always correctly, Quietism. Brother Laurence's *Practice of the Presence of God* is one of the best known of these excursions into the beatific Presence. Perhaps Fénélon expresses the underlying idea as well as any when he writes: "As the sacristan at the end of the service snuffs out the alter candles one after another, so must grace put out our natural life! And as his extinguisher, ill-applied, leaves behind it a gathering spark that melts the wax, so will it be with us if one spark of natural life remains" (*Spiritual Letters,* cciii).

Of course, neither absolute pietism with its insistence on a pure life of feeling as developed by Schleiermacher nor absolute quietism with its doctrine of "nothingness" and complete absorption is widely prevalent today—but the germinal ideas which govern both conceptions may be found in active operation. We have much literature dealing with the life of self-discipline and the organizing of retreats and the insistence on stated spiritual exercises which are traceable to an honest effort to carry out the plain injunction to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. We have, on the other hand, the mystic strain that finds a mighty magic in the word "surrender" and invites us to seek guidance continually by making ourselves as far as possible indifferent to the warring conditions around us. We are to sink back into ourselves in order that the divine voice may make itself heard largely through giving the subconscious a chance to assert itself.

An Important Fact

The fact that such phenomena recur at intervals in Christian experience proves that there is an element of truth in them. The cautious student will neither accept nor yet hastily dismiss them. He will take care to survey the scriptural evidence afresh as well as paying close attention to the vagaries of the human mind. A one-sided apprehension of truth may prove as dangerous as an acceptance of complete error. There is a fatal ease in taking hasty steps and such haste may presage disaster.

Before we attempt to unfold what seems to be the true solution, it is worth while noticing that not only are the two aspects of submission and action recorded in the Scripture, but at times they are placed in such close juxtaposition as to make their appearance still more puzzling. Thus in Romans vi we are exhorted to reckon ourselves dead to sin but alive unto God. We are invited to yield our members to God, where the passive side of surrender is, as it were, uppermost in thought. Yet in Romans vii there is evidence of activity. "The good that I would I do not" (Rom. vii. 19), and again in Romans viii. 13 we are said, by the Spirit, to mortify the deeds of the body. Again, if we are filled with the Spirit we are enjoined to speak in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. We have put on or invested ourselves with the new man; hence we are deliberately to put away lying. This close connection of surrender and submission with a recognized activity which belongs to us, warns us against the error of separating these two phases in the experience of sanctification. They are so closely united that no doctrine that does not take account of both can be a full explication of the New Testament teaching.

An Important Conclusion

When we come to consider the matter in the light of these facts there emerges the very same factor to which we directed attention in studying the facts of regeneration. God deals with us as human beings and calls into operation all the powers of the human personality. It is true that He, by His Almighty power, has to quicken them. It is false to suggest that He destroys, overwhelms or ignores them. Hence we need, first of all, to recognize that even in our renewed nature we are not capable, unaided, of fulfilling the will of God from the heart.

Romans VII

It is this juxtaposition and contrast that gives rise to questions concerning the meaning of Romans vii. In view of the passage in Romans viii that declares "the carnal mind is enmity against God" we cannot find it possible to read Romans vii. 11–25 as a description of St. Paul in his unregenerate days. The carnal mind is not subject to the

law of God, neither indeed can it be." It would be impossible for a carnal man of this sort to rejoice in the law of God after the inner man. We cannot but accept Dr. Moule's view that "He who can truly speak thus of an inmost sympathy, a sympathy of delight with the most holy law of God, is no half Christian; certainly not in Paul's view of things." We venture to quote further: "So we read this passage again, and note this absolute and eloquent silence in it about the Holy Ghost. And we dare, in that view, to interpret it as Paul's confession, not of a long-past experience, not of an imagined experience, but of his own normal experience always—when he acts out of character as a regenerate man. He fails, he 'reverts', when being a sinner by nature still, and in the body still, he meets the law, and meets temptation, in any strength short of the definitely sought power of the Holy Ghost, making Christ all to him for peace and victory. And he implies, surely, that this failure is not a bare hypothesis, but that he knows what it is. It is not that God is not sufficient. He is so, always, now, forever. But the man does not always adequately use God; as he ought to do, as he might do, as he will ever rise up afresh to do. And when he does not, the resultant failure—though it be but a thought of vanity, a flush of unexpressed anger, a microscopic flaw in the practice of truthfulness, an unhallowed imagination darting a moment through the soul—is to him sorrow, burthen, shame. It tells him that 'the flesh' is present still, present at least in its elements, though God can keep them out of combination" (*Epistle to Romans, in loco*).

Illustrations of Paul's Mode of Argument

This seems the best view of the passage; only we would further suggest that it is the manner of Paul to follow an argument through to its logical conclusion without at the moment introducing qualifications. This is very apparent in his discussion of love in 1 Corinthians xiii. Love in itself is there presented apart from its combination, in a human or divine personality, with other characteristics that do not alter its essential nature but do demand certain considerations governing its operation. For example, "Love thinketh no evil", but the person in whom love is manifested cannot always shut his eyes to evil. Similarly in speaking of the judgment seat of Christ, he, in the words of Dean Farrar, "leaves unsolved the antinomy between normal inevitable consequence and free remission". Again in dealing with rulers who bear not the sword in vain Paul is content to take the ideal purpose of government: "Wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same" (Rom. xiii. 3, R.V.). This is very remarkable coming from a man who had, even at that early stage, already experienced the hostility of opponents, and recognized the impotence of the civil power to protect him (2 Cor. xi. 32).

These passages are quite sufficient to justify the conclusion that Paul could pursue a theme in one true aspect to the exclusion for the time of other elements which, though known to him and recognized in other connections, would spoil the force of the particular argument he was seeking to develop. Without for a moment denying that Paul in Romans vii is drawing on his own experience, it seems to convey a still greater depth of meaning if we recognize the position of the passage. It is interposed between the exhortation to esteem ourselves dead indeed unto sin in Romans vi, and the great paean of triumph that makes Romans viii a veritable song of glory for the Christian. Reading it thus we see in it a strong warning against self-confidence. It seems as if St. Paul says: "Do not let your correct estimation of your standing in Christ and your consequent revolt in thought against sin deceive you. Consider the history of a soul, my soul, alive without the law, crushed by the judgment against sin, wakened to the glory and majesty of the law, delighting in it after the inner man, yet finding myself as helpless as a criminal bound to a dead body. Who shall deliver me? Jesus Christ my Lord." The personal account adds a touch of vividness to an argument that needs to be developed. It also shows us Paul, as Ramsay puts it, as "the embodiment in actual life of the qualities that make the true 'gentleman' (to use the old-fashioned term in the old-fashioned sense)" (*Pauline and Other Studies,* p. 39). It was a painful experience which he had to consider. Instead of coldly reasoning the matter, he steps down and places himself in the unwelcome predicament and thereby earns a readier acceptance for the sombre side of the doctrine of the renewed heart as he conceived it. There is at least a lesson for preachers in that attitude. But if the situation is as Paul presents it and we interpret him, the way is at once open to reconcile the apparent contradiction in the two methods of presenting the great spiritual fact of sanctification.

Limit of Power in the New Nature

The message goes to the root of our difficulty. Even the new nature which is given us in Christ Jesus is not in itself sufficient to enable us to stand the assaults of the world, the flesh and the devil. It gives us a new heart which seeks to fulfil the commandments of our Lord. It gives us heavenly desires. As the old Puritan, Boston, expresses it: "The sweet morsel of sin so greedily swallowed down, he now loathes, and would fain be rid of it, even as willingly as one who had drunk a cup of poison would throw it up again. . . . The will is endowed with an inclination bent and propensity to good" (*Fourfold State,* State. iii). All this is true and ought to be an occasion of thanksgiving to the righteous man. But if he relies upon his new nature to secure victory he is forgetting "the law in his members warring against the law of his mind". The figure used in the verb is most significant.

By this other law he is led away as a captive at once willingly and unwillingly.

The New Power

Hence something more is required to achieve victory. That something more is the filling of the Spirit. We need to recognize that just as we are dependent on our Lord for righteousness, so as truly are we dependent on His grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit for holiness. The notion that our acts, now that we are regenerated, would avail to secure victory, is so mistaken that it is necessary to avoid countenancing any such error. The root source of victory is the Spirit who is freely given us from God. We must continually rely on His power, we must cultivate faith, we must look unto Jesus. Hence we can understand the repeated assertions that it is God who works in us, that He gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask, that it is God's resurrection power in us that secures all victory. This is the truth underlying quietism and we need to counsel ourselves to receive it. We still walk by faith and not by sight as truly as on the day when first we apprehended in consciousness that Jesus was our Saviour. There can be no alteration in that attitude of soul. "He that believeth", is not merely "He that once believes", as so many falsely read it, paving the way for Antinomianism, the deadly error that an unfruitful faith is sufficient to save the soul. The double truth that God creates a good will and enables the good will thus created is admirably expressed in the Collect for Tuesday in Easter Week in the Church of England Prayer Book: "As by thy special grace preventing (that is, going before or anticipating) us Thou dost put into our mind good desires, so by Thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect."

The Theory of Habit

There is a slight parallel in the psychological theory of habit. Environment and continued action between them create certain aptitudes and inclinations. These well up from the lower region of the unconscious and find expression consciously in fairly fixed modes of action. The reason for any individual response does not lie wholly in the immediate facts. Such responses have a history behind them. Man is, to use the rather ponderous term which delights the psychologist, educable. His educability results from the fact that he has inherited a large number of impulses, and the direction of these through training in fixed modes of action creates habits and then habits form character. From this point of view man's actions are largely predictable because he has developed certain tendencies in certain directions and is likely to follow those tendencies. It is said that housewives used to set their clocks by the daily appearance of Immanual Kant who started his walk at the same time and finished

it within the same period of time each day. Incidentally, of course, this circumstance establishes the fact that Kant was not a clergyman.

Something Greater Still

The New Testament presents us with something much greater than this operation on implanted instincts. It tells us that Christ dwells in our heart by faith and that the Spirit helpeth our infirmities with groanings which cannot be uttered (Rom. viii. 26). There is here a process in the unconscious realm of our being. William James is bold enough or rash enough to say: "But if you, being orthodox Christians, ask me as a psychologist whether the reference of a phenomenon to a subliminal self does not exclude the notion of the direct presence of the Deity altogether, I have to say frankly that as a psychologist I do not see why it necessarily should. The lower manifestations of the subliminal, indeed, fall within the resources of the personal subject: his ordinary sense-material inattentively taken in and subconsciously remembered and combined, will account for all his usual automatisms. But just as our primary wide-awake consciousness throws open our souls to the touch of things material, so it is logically conceivable that *if there be* higher spiritual agencies that can directly touch us, the psychological condition of their doing so *might be* our possession of a subconscious region which alone should yield access to them" (*Varieties of Religious Experience,* p. 242. Cf. p. 515 ff. for James "Over-Belief" that this is more than a perhaps).

James' Misconception

It appears strange that James connects this theory with cataclysmic conversion and insists that the Moravians and Methodists have seen the true significance of this aspect of the question (p. 226). Perhaps the explanation is that James was not widely read in medieval or indeed modern theological treatises. If he were he could not have failed to notice the insistence on the infusion of "a habit" which occupies so much of medieval theology and certainly is not associated with sudden conversion, though it has a great bearing on the subject he discusses. To quote only one authority, Aquinas wrote as follows: "Grace working freely, that is, justifying, is in the soul a real and positive thing; a certain supernatural quality, not the same as the virtues infused, but a certain habit beside the infused virtues, faith, hope and charity which underlies (*praesupponitur*) these virtues as the source and root of them. It takes possession of the underlying essence of the soul, not the powers, but from it virtues flow into the powers of the soul by which the powers are moved to action" (*Summa II,* par. i, q. 110 ff.). Had this important aspect been kept in mind it would have been possible for James to proceed further in his inquiry without burdening himself directly either with Moravian or Methodist deductions. He

would have seen that the schoolmen, however much they exaggerated certain points of doctrine, had at least a glimmering of the idea that divine grace penetrated to the inner recesses of the soul and wrought there effectively. The distinction between the potencies of the mind and its essence, which Aquinas considers, is just the distinction between the latent and the expressed which lies at the root of the distinction James seeks to make between the conscious and subliminal self. It is not, of course, necessary to accept Aquinas' special doctrine of grace in order to see that here he has unveiled a very suggestive conception. The Protestant Reformed idea would be that what Aquinas calls "grace" may more fittingly be called God. The divine Spirit alone takes possession of the underlying essence of the soul and alone is the Source of those virtues that flow into the powers of the soul and move it to action. That explains why it is that the New Testament lays such stress on the enabling of the Spirit and on the resurrection power of God. The same Spirit who quickened the soul, dead in trespasses and sins, continues graciously to operate. Without Him we can do nothing. To quote Dr. Moule again: "It is the Lord Himself dwelling in you who is your victory, and the victory is to be realized by a conscious and decisive appeal to Him." For at this point we leave our psychological parallel behind. There are not simply blind impulses seeking expression in the vast reservoir of our infra-conscious life. There is more than that. There is the Holy Source of all life and being who works to guide our wayward minds and wills but who works in accordance with the nature of the being whom He has created. James goes a good way along this road when he writes: "Disregarding the over-beliefs, and confining ourselves to what is common and generic, we have in *the fact that the conscious person is continuous with a wider self through which saving experiences come,* a positive content of religious experience which, it seems to me, is *literally and objectively true as far as it goes*" (ibid., p. 515).

Unanswered Questions

But hosts of questions obtrude themselves here that psychology is unable to answer. Is the subconscious or unconscious self characterized by that unity in experience which belongs to consciousness? It would make many facts easy of explanation if we could say that it is so. But we lack the evidence of coherence which emerges only when we reach the stratum of consciousness. Still we can confidently assert that there is no ground for denying that the factors which make up consciousness may have their source in conscious being. Revelation tells us that in God we live and move and have our being. The widening of our horizons by the discovery of the influence of habit, in the modern rather than the theological sense, does nothing to destroy but rather gives us something to assist us in understanding this great fact. Not

that we think such explanations are sufficient. At best they are but pointers to a truth that transcends them. But it is helpful to notice these pointers. It is still more helpful that in some particulars the Bible theologian anticipated the psychologist. There must be the consciousness, therefore, of our utter dependence on Christ our Lord if he is to be formed in us. There must be an attitude of entire submission to the will of God and the gracious influence of His Holy Spirit. This helps us to see that the so-called passive attitude has its place, lest, beginning in the Spirit, we seek to be made perfect in the flesh (Gal. iii. 3). Luther, in his downright way, says: "Whatsoever then is most excellent in man, the same here Paul calleth flesh, is the wisdom of reason and the righteousness of the law itself" (*Commentary on Galatians, in loco*).

Is It One Fixed Decision?

But here an important question is raised. Is this surrender of the soul to the Spirit's influence and power, or to the Spirit Himself, one fixed decision which need never be repeated? Or, to put the matter perhaps more simply, Do we believe for justification and then again at a given moment believe for sanctification? This point of view is often urged with great earnestness, yet it does not seem to accord with the fullest teaching of Scripture. Its great danger is to suggest that the work of God in justification is, if we may so express it, a bare minimum which secures salvation but does not seriously affect the life. We find such statements made as that Jesus is taken as Saviour but is not acknowledged as Lord. If this is only a loose and unguarded way of saying that many Christians live far below the great possibilities opened for them in the life of full surrender it would not be necessary to do more than point out that it is an unguarded way of speaking. But when the idea is extended to suggest that it is possible to continue in a low state of Christian living in full consciousness that there are other demands pressed upon us by God which we can afford to ignore if we merely wish to escape condemnation, and are indifferent to any crown of reward, then indeed it becomes a most serious evil and may lead people to nourish an utterly false hope. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord" is equally as true as the message, "He that believeth hath everlasting life"; they must be conjoined and not separated.

The Place of Crisis

Even those, however, who escape this danger may readily fall into the error of conceiving that experiences of crisis are the essential things in the Christian's life. They may keep looking for unusual and heart-stirring messages which quicken their emotions and may forget the very large number of passages in Scripture that speak of a daily walking. They may forget the great message of the apostle: "Though

our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" (2 Cor. iv. 16). The whole tenor of Scripture is against the idea that one supreme act of decision secures to us permanently all the blessing of sanctification; while the whole tenor of Scripture supports the idea that by one act of faith, not ceasing, as we saw above, but continuing as an attitude of the soul, but yet embodying a decisive act of reliance, we are justified before God. The exhortation to Christians is to be renewed in the spirit of their minds, to mortify the doings of the body, to press towards the mark. There are no parallel passages which imply that the act of faith in the Saviour must be repeated in the same way to secure the pardon of sins. "We which have believed do enter into rest" is the message of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The same epistle exhorts the followers of the Lord to go on unto perfection. Dr. Moule writes wisely: ". . . the first case is in its nature one and single: an admission, an incorporation. The second is in its nature progressive and developing: the discovery, advancing with the occasion for it, of the greatness of the resources of Christ for life. The latter *may,* not *must,* thus include one great crisis in consciousness, one particular spiritual act. It is much more certain to include many starting-points, critical developments, marked advances. . . . With each such advance the *fullness* of the Spirit will be received with a holy and happy realization" (*Outlines of Christian Doctrine,* p. 199). We must guard against the idea that what is sometimes called "the gift of the Spirit" is communicated once for all either at the time of conversion or at a later period, and this gift is the condition of the victorious life. The truth is that we receive the Holy Spirit at conversion or, more strictly, at regeneration, but we need continually to yield ourselves to His influence and power.

"Quench Not The Spirit"

"Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thess. v. 19) has been variously interpreted. The next verse—"Despise not prophesyings"—has been regarded as defining it. The miraculous gifts of the Spirit were in danger of being stifled in the Thessalonian Church. On the other hand, the succeeding text may be in the nature of a subsidiary thought, a moving from the general to the particular, the reverse action to that which appears in the text, "But fornication and all uncleanness avoid", where the movement of thought is from the particular to the general. The next two clauses taken together, namely, "Despise not prophesyings", "Prove all things", suggest strongly that this is the purport of the passage. The train of thought appears to be: "On the one hand do not despise prophesyings, but on the other hand do not neglect the obligation to prove what is said, an obligation that extends to all things." We have, moreover, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God" (Eph. iv. 30) at the end of a series of practical injunctions where there

is no hint of miraculous manifestations. At the end of these practical injunctions, the word occurs: "Be filled with the Spirit" (v. 13). The most natural conclusion is that which regards the latter injunction as in contrast to the attitude of mind which grieves the Spirit. In that case any lapse into the former deeds of the old man would be a grieving of the Holy Spirit, while the enabling power which would help us to put on the new man would be the filling of the Spirit. If we are convicted of pandering to the flesh, then something in the nature of a crisis arises and it may be a very acute crisis. But at all times we need the Spirit's filling and must draw upon Him continuously.

Pietism Again

This brings us naturally to the second collection of passages which have occasioned the theory we have called pietism. We are not only commanded to yield to God and exhorted to consider all power as coming from Him, so that the quietist suggests that the secret of victory is complete absorption of ourselves into the great ocean of divine power and love; we are also commanded to be active, to put off certain evil practices, to mortify the deeds of the body, to pray without ceasing, so that the pietist, in the sense we have suggested for the term, contends that the secret of a new life is in our active co-operation with God. To use a very homely and oft-repeated phrase: "We must not let God down." On a very shallow view of the position, God has done His best, and now it is our responsibility to make the next move. We can make or mar the work of God in us.

While the New Testament emphasizes most emphatically that the work of grace is of God and not of our inherent capacity and so far lends support to the quietist position, it is equally emphatic on the fact that God worketh in us or with us and thus does justice to the truth resident in pietism. By combining both ideas it corrects the errors resident in both quietism and pietism. Quietism would rob man of all initiative and real activity. Pietism would rob God of His due meed of reverent adoration. The New Testament makes God the Divine Inspirer and man the active rational agent. The work is God's and is yet truly ours.

CHAPTER XII

FACTORS IN THE LIFE OF HOLINESS

The Place of Exhortation

But if we reject, as we ought, the error which asserts that sanctification is simply the employment of our normal powers to develop a righteous character, why, then, the multitude of exhortations which indicate so clearly that unless there is a response on our part there can be no fulfilment of those good works in which God has ordained that we should walk? The answer has been repeatedly suggested that God has respect unto the nature of the being whom He has created. A moral result demands a moral response. When we study the matter a little more closely we may say further that God's work is rarely if ever disjointed from God's appointed means. It pleases God through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe (1 Cor. i. 21). Here we have to remember the dictum which we have learned from Aquinas as well as others: "Though God ties us to means, yet not Himself." The Agent is always greater than the agency. But we can bear in mind also that, where God enjoins means, He gives them the sanction of His power as well as His promise. The words in John xx. 21–3, so often quoted in a controversial spirit only, plainly indicate that the Holy Spirit went forth with the witness of the Church and effected what its messengers proclaimed: the forgiveness of sins. We need not hesitate, then, to assume that where a command from God is given the result of obedience will be to secure the prize offered.

Putting On The New Man

When we are told to put on the new man, that may be a task as far beyond our unaided power as the stretching forth of his hand was beyond the power of the paralysed man. But once the command went forth the power was granted simultaneously with the purpose of obedience. "He stretched it out." So there is a place for exhortation and command. To those who are dead in sins such exhortations and commands are ineffective until the Holy Spirit quickens the soul. To those who are quickened they are equally ineffective unless the divine Spirit witnesses in and to our spirits so that there is secured a ready will to obey God's commands and a due appreciation of our responsibility in any individual circumstance. The methods, if we may reverently so put it, that God employs to make clear to us His purposes are the methods that are usually employed to direct men to conscious effort. The fact that the effort is beyond them, considered in themselves,

offers no reason why the ordinary appeals to the intellect, feeling and will should not be employed.

But if that be so there are two factors in the life of holiness. Because we are still "in the flesh" there is often conscious conflict between opposing desires. "With the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom. vii. 25). This conflict, as the apostle teaches, may be very acute. There is no suggestion that it is a finished campaign; rather it is a series of battles, the end of which, however, is assured victory through Jesus Christ our Lord. But, in addition, there is a life of progress. We "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. iii. 18). The eyes of our understanding (or of our heart) are opened (Eph. i. 18). This progress may be retarded. When it is retarded we may experience a crisis just as when we had a conflict with the flesh. The crisis would here take the form of clinging to what had become traditional conceptions of the divine message and working. We seek to thrust out of our consciousness the newer and fuller revelation which is being opened to us by the Spirit. No doubt the retardation is also due to the working of the flesh.

Intellectual blindness is just as much a consequence of the fall as any base impulse that seeks to gain dominance. Perhaps, let us say it in a chilly whisper, the modern contempt for theological study may come under censure, and impel us, when we see this, to join in Paul's prayer that the eyes of our understanding may be opened. No doubt it might be said that every act of volition involves something in the nature of a crisis. When Hippocrates used the term to signify the point of change in the progress of disease he probably had in mind its contemporary employment in the sense of a trial, an issue to be decided, and a dispute. Probably in most acts of choice an alternative is present, though sometimes so unobtrusively as to escape full conscious notice. Grave decisions are made after full weighing of the pros and cons. When interest is enlisted on two sides of an issue there is consciousness of conflict, and the decision is governed by intimations welling up from what James has called "the wider self". As we have seen, the divine Spirit works through that "wider self" as well as through our conscious self.

Definite Daily Decisions

The steady advance in grace and knowledge in a series of definite daily decisions is as much His work as the assistance He affords in the wild turmoil of conflicting desires. The Holy Spirit works "in" the man, and as a consequence He works "through" the man. A study of the word "conscience", as it is used by Paul, makes this clear. Attempts have been made to distinguish between the earlier ideas connoted by conscience and our later concept of it as an arbiter between right and wrong (see, for example, Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, in loco*); but it is remarkable that both concepts are fused in

the Pauline usage. The primary sense still prevails. A man with conscience of the idol (1 Cor. viii. 7) means a man who in his self-conscious apprehension regards the idol as either a real god or a representation of a real god. Yet Paul speaks of having lived in all good conscience before God (Acts xxiii. 1), where his self-conscious life presents nothing of which he could accuse himself in the matter of double dealings. The verb indicates that he was speaking of his conduct as a citizen. So he exercised himself to have a conscience void of offence. He aimed so to live, that no amount of introspection would discover anything in his self-conscious life that might justly be the ground of an accusation made by himself, by God, or by his fellowman (Acts xxiv. 16).

Two Elements in Conscience

If we compare Romans ix. 1 and xiii. 5; 1 Corinthians viii. 7 and x. 29; 2 Corinthians iv. 2 and v. 11, it becomes obvious that Paul's use of the word "conscience" involved two elements. There was the inner consciousness of the thought or act. "That concomitant act of mind which Hamilton has well called 'the complement of the cognitive energies'" (Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, in loco*). But there was also the inevitable moral import which emerges immediately, in which consciousness is regarded as our own elective act as it presents itself for appraisement before God and man. Paul would certainly not share the common idea today that the caprice of the individual is all that is necessary to satisfy the demand to hold a good conscience. His reference to weak consciences and defiled consciences establishes this. He would undoubtedly adopt the position credited to John Knox in his famous interview with Mary Queen of Scots, in which he is reputed to have replied to the Queen's appeal to her conscience that conscience is of little use unless it be well instructed.

The Method of the Spirit's Work

The divine operation instructs the conscience, and this is achieved by the Word of God found in Holy Scripture. This can be secured only through a direct appeal to the consciousness of the individual. That it is also an appeal to the conscience, in the later use of the word, is due to the nature of the appeal which exalts the glory of God and warns against the deceitfulness of sin. Both aspects are quite explicit (see, for example, Eph. i, iv. 17–32). The slow formation of moral judgments as a result of close and ever closer study of the Word of God may be illustrated in history.

Two Instances

Two incidents may help us to understand the reality of the process. Cotton Mather, the renowned Congregationalist, wrote in 1682 to a

Mr. John Higgenson, advising him that a ship, *The Welcome,* had on board "an hundred or more of the heretics and malignants called Quakers; the brig, *Porpoise,*" he continues, "will waylay *The Welcome* slyly as near the Cape of Cod as may be, and make captive the said Penn and his ungodly crew, so that the Lord may be glorified, and not mocked on the soil of this new country with the heathen worship of these people. Much spoil can be made by selling the whole lot to Barbados, where slaves fetch good prices in rum and sugar . . ." (quoted in *A Christian Miscellany,* H. R. Minn). Lest any should fancy that this is a mere extravagance of Puritanism, which is nowadays derided in exact ratio to the ignorance of its real tenets displayed by the deriders, we can parallel it by the fact that the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel retained slaves long after the edict releasing them had become law (quoted in R. E. D. Clark, *Conscious and Unconscious Sin,* p. 9).

The Community and the Individual

What takes place in the community also takes place in the individual. In fact we may say that the general order of providence is that an individual is first aroused, and by his dynamic energy wakens a people to moral action. To exclude all this from sanctification is to violate common sense as well as the plain indication of Scripture. But the appeal to consciousness evokes a response. It must do so with a self-conscious being. There are several features in this response. It divides, of course, into attraction and repulsion. We depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it (Ps. xxxiv. 14). But there is also, if we may so say, an internal as well as an external consequence to every such reaction.

The Growth of Moral Consciousness

We retain in our minds after the act is performed, or the choice is made, at least a vague consciousness of the reason for it. Every repeated action or choice in a certain direction gives body to that inner consciousness. If we conceive our choices and actions as relating to a Personal God we clothe our concepts of His will with some of the attributes of personality. "Thou God seest me" becomes an operative power in enabling us to decide. We become conscious of God and relate our activities directly to Him. But such consciousness seeks communion. Spirit reaches out to touch Spirit. St. Paul, with his usual penetration, discovers to us this important feature in our relation to God. "For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. ii. 11, R.V.).

The Effects of Communion

When the depths of our souls are stirred by the sense of God near to us and speaking to us we not only choose His way but we realize that we have intimate dealings with Him. It would be a mistake to assert that this is all that prayer means, but prayer certainly means this. The Spirit is given that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God (1 Cor. ii. 12). And the deeper consciousness abides that God, the Personal God, is the Giver. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3).

Expression in Prayer

It is of the utmost importance that what may be called this inner response to a Personal God or inner conviction of our relation to Him should find appropriate expression. Obviously because it deals with personal relations, it will not find it either in the rejection of evil or the embracing of good as such. It must find realization in personal communion. And so we have the apostolic injunction "continuing instant in prayer" (Rom. xii. 12) in the midst of what, following our present terminology, would be called external responses to the revealed will. It is as natural to pray as to distribute to the necessity of the saints or to strive to live peaceably with all men. Kuyper has a suggestive definition of prayer. He writes: "Speaking comprehensively, we understand by prayer *every religious act by which we take upon ourselves directly to speak to the Eternal Being*" (*Work of the Holy Spirit*, p. 620). A cold, even a barren sense of duty has ennobled men and caused them to do great deeds. There is a still further advance in enthusiasm when the soul is possessed by a great cause. Horace felt that when he wrote: "To die for the fatherland is a sweet thing and becoming" (*Odes* III, ii). But the deepest enthusiasm is evoked by the appeal of person to person. Wellington said of Napoleon: "I used to say of him that his presence on the field made the difference of forty thousand men" (Stanhope's *Life of Wellington*, p. 9). And the Christian is not deprived of this amazing stimulus. The recognition that he is dealing with a Person finds its proper outlet in prayer and praise, and, recurrently, prayer and praise deepens the conviction that he is dealing with a Person. Here also we have the assurance that the Spirit helpeth our infirmities. The unspoken groans or sighs evidently cover the region in which aspiration cannot find expression. There are desires of the Spirit vaguely felt which must remain unexpressed. The desire for the redemption of the body provokes a groan in us, but there are unknown possibilities which hover on the fringe of our anxious thought.

Prayer and Trust

Here prayer expends itself in trust. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know . . . that we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John iii. 2). Prayer has therefore a very definite and important place in our sanctification. There have been, from time to time, appeals made to determine duty by reference solely to a recognized code of morals: duty for duty's sake. Those who press this view seem unaware of the root difficulty that no such code has ever emerged except as the product of the free spirit in man. It is personal in origin and finds its best expression when it is also made personal in action by relating it to a Supreme Will. Prayer helps us to understand that we are not struggling to realize an ideal in a barren wilderness or merely seeking to secure correspondence to environment, but that we are invited to relate our best activities to one who knows our frame and answers even our unspoken cry.

Sanctification and Sacraments

The means which God employs for our sanctification are rational means suited to rational beings. In this connection we must not overlook the sacraments of the gospel. It is remarkable that, with the exception of the Society of Friends and the Salvation Army, the regular use of the sacraments has been accepted as at least useful by the great bodies of Christian believers. The different attitude of the Society of Friends can be related to the underlying principles of mysticism which influenced George Fox so profoundly. If the whole aim of sanctification is absorption in the divine Being, then it is easy to see how any material intrusion would be unwelcome. The attitude of the Salvation Army, if my information be correct, was largely determined by the desire to avoid controversy. At the beginning the Army did not set out to be a full Church, nor does it quite claim to be so at present. It was regarded by its founder as an auxiliary to established communions, an ideal which it was difficult to maintain. The precise place of the sacraments did not seem to matter so much as the supreme task of reaching the lapsed masses with the gospel message. If this is anything like a correct picture, the most important thing to be explained is not the divergence from the usual custom of the Church but the custom itself. In what way do the sacraments minister to our sanctification?

The Roman Catholic View

The Church of Rome has a very definite answer. The sacraments confer grace. But that is not sufficient. The Latin tongue can be very precise. It can also be annoyingly vague. "To confer" in the Latin tongue means "to carry with" anything, to unite, to collect. It means so

many things that it provokes at once the question: How? The Church of Rome supplements her statement by asserting that the grace is conferred *ex opere operato* and directly by the inherent virtue of the sacrament unless the recipient opposes a bar to grace. Apparently it is taken for granted that the obstacle must be in the nature of a conscious act, as infants are said to be unable to oppose an obstacle. But our immediate purpose is not to pursue the Roman doctrine to its logical conclusion. We are content to observe that there is here an intelligible theory as to the place the sacraments occupy. According to Aquinas, baptism, especially, produces in the soul a justifying grace and instils that "habit" of virtue which moves the powers of the soul. The Reformed theology has not been able to accept this account of the matter.

A Lutheran View

The Lutheran theologians have felt able to go further in that direction. Thus Martensen writes: "In prayer there is only a *unio mystica,* a real, yet only spiritual, psychological union; but in the sacraments the deepest mystery rests in the truth that in them Christ communicates Himself not only spiritually but in His glorified corporeity. The final goal of God's kingdom is not only that history, but that nature also, shall be redeemed and glorified. 'Corporeity is the final aim of God's way.' This, which is the final aim of development, which can be realized only in the perfection of all things, is anticipated in the sacraments" (*Christian Dogmatics,* p. 418).

What Is Meant?

We find difficulty in understanding the exact nature of this communication of Christ's glorified corporeity. Is it a communication to sense or to Spirit? The contrast with the exercise of prayer and psychological union suggests the former. The adjective "glorified", in so far as it qualifies corporeity, warns against a too rigid sense interpretation. We are left more or less in the air. Hooker, the English divine, seems to speak more soberly on this point. "If (Christ's) mystical body have now any such new property by force whereof it may everywhere, even in substance, present itself, or may at once be in many places, then hath the majesty of His estate extinguished the merit of His nature." He adds: "As for any mixture of the substance of His flesh with ours, the participation which we have of Christ includeth no such kind of gross surmise" (see *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity,* Bk. V., lv, 4–8).

Martensen on the Reformed View

But if we find difficulty in accepting the view that sacraments add some touch of corporeity, even by anticipation, to the participation which is realized in prayer, we are at once confronted with the ques-

tion: "What special place have they in our sanctification? It is gratifying to notice that Martensen, with his usual depth of insight, while he holds out for a Lutheran conception which we find ourselves unable to adopt, is also alive to the Reformed view of the educational value of sacraments. He writes: "Where is there a man to be found who presumes that he is so intimately united with the Lord and the invisible Church as to be able to do without the visible bond of union by which the Lord draws all to Himself even as it unites all to one another as parts of one body? Indeed, if we assign to this educational aspect its weight and import in this its fullest measure we must recognize it as that which we must have *chiefly* before us. We therefore maintain that the last definite and perfect import of the sacrament is to be sought in the indissoluble union of the holy spiritual, and of the holy natural mystery" (op. cit., p. 422). We need not follow the discussion any further in order to see that both the Lutheran and Reformed conceptions, whatever their differences, agree that sacraments are instruments in our sanctification and have a very special message for the believing soul.

Puritans and Sacraments

There is a widespread idea abroad that Puritan theology disregards the sacraments. This is due to a confusion between the Puritans and later developments which really had their roots in the deism of the eighteenth century as that system influenced more orthodox theological positions. The Puritan position which here is the position of all the Reformed bodies is well expressed in the Heidelberg Catechism. "What are the sacraments? They are holy visible signs and seals ordained by God for this end, that He may more fully declare and seal by them the promise of His gospel unto us; to wit, that, not only unto all believers in general but unto each of them in particular, He freely giveth remission of sins and life eternal, upon the account of that only sacrifice of Christ which He accomplished upon the cross" (Q. 66, trans. Rev. A. S. Thelwall). When we consider this question in connection with what has already been said on the importance of prayer as establishing a personal relation between the soul and God we can see that the sacraments carry us one step further in that direction. We, who are held in mortal bodies which are at once the means of expression of our personalities and the limits imposed on that expression, value next to immediate bodily contact through the appearance, voice, or actions of the one with whom relations are effected or sought, tangible evidences that have some connection with the person of whom we think.

Value of Relics and Their Danger

The relics of Napoleon that used to repose in Madame Tussaud's in Baker Street, London, were watched by interested crowds because

they helped them to realize something of the actuality of this great figure in history. There is a danger in that. Relics, not always genuine, have evoked a flood of sentimental devotion that has swamped more genuine spiritual aspirations. But the very fact that we crave so much for the visible association may supply at least a hint as to the value of sacraments. The danger of making the relic the object of adoration has not been wholly obviated. But the transitory nature of the sacramental signs and the concentration of thought on the acts rather than the things has gone far to remove that danger. He said: "Baptize." The sacrament recalls His gracious command and links us to His Person as a consequence. He said: "Take, eat." The last supper recurs as a vivid appreciation of the historic Christ in the very contemplation of His approaching sacrifice. He must have a strange conception of human nature who does not realize that these historic links must strangely stir the soul of him who believes. We are lifted out of the region of pure thought and placed back again in the sphere of actual history.

The Personal Elements in Sacraments

These are real commands and real acts of the Lord, whom, not having seen, we love. The sacrament, therefore, intensifies our consciousness of personal relations with God and as such is a very potent agency in sanctification. Even prayer has been degraded into an appeal to the "Immensities and Eternities". It is allowed to degenerate into vacuous sentimentalities. The Word of God has been regarded as a collection of wise maxims to which we are well advised to take heed. Sacraments at least restore us to the vigorous ideal of an active, moving Being who stoops to our low estate and has definite dealings with us as persons. It may be admitted that sacraments have not escaped the inevitable depreciation born of humanism. There is something pathetic about the picture of the deadly earnest John Stuart Mill debating with himself the question as to whether he should observe the Holy Communion and at last deciding in its favour as a feast in remembrance of a great spiritual leader.

Are Sacraments Magical?

Then, again, we shall be told that the theory of the sacraments sometimes approaches the magical. It does even in the system of Aquinas when he speaks of a special virtue from the water conveying itself to the soul of the recipient. The word magic is here used in its popular sense of the release of some occult agency by the manipulation of sensible things. All this must be admitted, but it is significant that sacraments are less in evidence in mysticism and more directly point to the agency at least of an outside power. When we free the concept from the accretions of debased notions which attach to all forms of

religious life when the mind is not fully enlightened, we discover in the appointed emblems a true representation of gift and giver.

The Essential Factor

The factor that makes the sacrament so unspeakably precious is that it came to us by the direct authority of our Lord, "ordained by Christ Himself". God comes to us in an historic situation: "I do set my bow in the cloud"; "This is my covenant . . . every male child shall be circumcised"; "When I see the blood I will pass over you"; "Go ye . . . make disciples . . . baptizing"; "Take, eat. This is my body". Calvin, dealing with this aspect, writes: "The truth of God is sufficiently solid and certain in itself and can receive no better confirmation from any other quarter than from itself; but our faith being slender and weak, unless it be supported on every side, and sustained by every assistance, immediately shakes and fluctuates, totters and falls. And as we are corporeal, always creeping on the ground, cleaving to terrestrial and carnal objects, and incapable of understanding or conceiving of anything of a spiritual nature, our merciful Lord, in his infinite indulgence, accommodates Himself to our capacity, condescending to lead us to Himself even by these earthly elements, and in the flesh itself to present to us a memoir of spiritual blessings" (*Inst,* Bk. IV, c. XIV, iii).

Individual Designation

And there is a second point, distinct from this realization of an approach to us in our corporeal condition, which emphasizes the feature of personal relation. The Heidelberg Catechism also draws attention to the individual designation of the gift conveyed to us by the fact that we individually receive for ourselves the sacred signs. "Not only unto all believers in general, but unto each of them in particular, He freely grants remission of sins." Hooker, the Anglican divine, expresses the same view. It does not seem possible to conceive of a better way of making the general promise effective to the individual and at the same time to emphasize the donative character of the gospel message. Paul tells the Corinthians that the bread which they break is the communion of the body of Christ. The popular restriction of the word communion to the sacramental act has concealed from some its real meaning. The Revised Version margin suggests the true significance of the word, by rendering it "participation". Its use by Paul of our share in the Spirit (Phil. ii. 1; 2 Cor. xiii. 13), in the sufferings of Christ (Phil. iii. 10), in faith (Philem. 6), in the Son of God (1 Cor. i. 9), makes it quite clear that he is referring to something which belongs to believers and which they hold in common. The next verse, contrasting the separate character of the individuals and the fact that they become one through being partakers of the one loaf, makes this interpretation certain.

A Double Idea

The double idea that we as individuals participate in the body of Christ and by that participation become "one bread, one body" gives a peculiar value to the sacramental action. This is, of course, taught clearly in the message that we lay hold on Christ by faith, but is here re-enforced by the individual action which yet is a common action of the many. The same is expressed in relation to baptism. We are all baptized into the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. By this action we are, says Paul, united with Christ in the likeness of His death. There is here also the individual action and the common identity in belief and fact.

An Objection

An objection may present itself that this mode of looking at the sacraments gives them simply an educative value. No doubt the educative element is, as Martensen saw, peculiarly prominent, but there is something more to which attention needs to be directed. Both sacraments are received at the hands of others. We do not baptize ourselves —we are baptized. We do not take the bread and wine alone in the solitude of our own rooms—we meet to proclaim the Lord's death until He come.

Sacraments Donative

So the sacraments have a donative as well as an educative aspect. They teach us that we come as suppliants seeking a gift, not as those who wish simply in pictorial form to remind ourselves of a gift already received. There is an active and a passive character in sacramental reception. We seek the blessing of baptism or others seek it for us. We stretch out the hand of faith in Holy Communion.

Change in Mode of Reception

The change in the mode of reception at the Reformation emphasizes this. The bread is not placed in the mouth of the recipient but into the hand and conveyed to the mouth by the recipient. But we take something that is offered to us. We are recipients of the manifold grace of God. This is indeed educative, but the lesson it teaches is that we are dependent on God's good favour. The active side must be complemented by the passive side. God comes to us in grace when we come to Him in humble dependence on His mercy. Bonar, in his beautiful communion hymn, has revealed to us this side of the divine institution.

Here, O my Lord, I see Thee face to face:
Here faith can grasp and handle things unseen;
Here would I grasp with firmer hand Thy grace;
And all my weariness upon Thee lean.

If we keep before our minds these special aspects of the sacramental seals we will have little difficulty in recognizing that the sacraments, as means used by the Holy Spirit, have a most important place in the great work of sanctification. To neglect them is to deprive ourselves of a most valuable aid to that progress in holiness which God in His infinite mercy has made the earnest desire of every redeemed soul. We may and do believe that where there is neglect without conscious disobedience God will graciously make up the deficiency, seeing He is the Almighty Worker and can find means at will to deepen in the soul the consciousness of His presence and power. But where there is deliberate neglect of a recognized appointed means of grace we cannot demand that blessing shall be bestowed. It is our part to study the Word of God and employ every agency there set forth, to stimulate our dull apprehension and to lay hold of the offered Christ as He is displayed to us alike in word and in sacrament. The Word gives us rich and exceeding great promises. The sacraments, as appointed seals of the promises, assure us that the Lord graciously bestows them on each individually.

CHAPTER XIII

GLORIFICATION

When is Sanctification Complete?

But if sanctification is a gradual process, moving with ups and downs towards a determined end, when does it reach completion? The Bible answer is very definite. It reaches completion in the spirit at the moment of death or of the Lord's appearing for His saints. It reaches full completion in body and soul when the dead in Christ arise and we which are alive and remain are changed. This view is not accepted by many, and it is advisable, therefore, to marshal the evidence for it.

Two New Testament Passages

There are two passages in the New Testament which seem conclusive. In describing the fuller benefits of the new covenant the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews states: "But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect" (xii. 22, 23 R.V.). The structure of the passage leads to a climax. The whole purpose is completed in and through Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant by means of "the blood of sprinkling". It is realized, at the moment when the writer contemplates it, by a company of just men, made perfect as to their spirits. They are in the presence of God, the Judge of all, and enrolled in the Church of the First Born, sharing their blessings with the myriad company of angels.

This is in harmony with xi. 35, where the resurrection is still in the future. We draw near to spirits made perfect, but not yet to the final triumph of the resurrection from the dead. Then in 2 Corinthians v. 10 (R.V.) we read: "For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Here the judgment is determined by the activities of this life. We are judged for the things done by means of the body. If there were a gradual process of sanctification in the spirit world it is difficult to account for the total disregard of it in a passage dealing with judgment.

Does Death Sanctify?

An objection is raised to this line of reasoning. It is sometimes said that a sanctifying efficacy is by this theory placed in death, and this

is wholly unwarranted. It is asked: If we reach the valley of the shadow in an imperfect state of holiness what is there in the shock of death that can suddenly transform us?

Not in Death but in Circumstances Surrounding Death

There is nothing in the shock of death itself that has a transforming or sanctifying power, but there is much in the circumstances to which death offers an entrance. If a man lands in friendly lines from a parachute there is nothing in a parachute that could ensure his safety. It could equally well suspend him in front of a battery of shrapnel, when the result would be strictly discomposing. But it does land him in friendly territory and his troubles for the time being are over. So it is with the believer at death. He is landed in friendly territory and he leaves "the flesh", his deadly enemy, for ever behind him. He loses the clog of the body, which is dead because of sin, and he is ushered into the presence of his Lord. The reader who can see no significance in these two invariable concomitants resulting from the death of a believer must study Scripture to very little profit.

Purgatory

The Roman Doctrine of Purgatory, being based on a theory of expiation by the individual, while it has no support in Scripture, is inherently more reasonable than the counter view of a gradual development in which the remaining seeds of evil are slowly caused to die. There is no soil in which the seeds can germinate. The soul is with the redeemed in a holy environment; the body still unredeemed is no longer the instrument through which the soul expresses itself. Even a thoroughgoing evolutionist might be pardoned for saying that in such circumstances a new spirit made perfect is likely to emerge, if such a conception had any meaning.

Progress not Gradual in that Sense Here

Nor is gradual progress in sanctification even here as uniform as the theory seems to demand. Not only does regeneration effect a surprising and sudden change in character, very frequently a change that can be at once observed, but we make sudden advances in holiness and receive sudden setbacks.

Most of us find some truth in Cowper's hymn: "Where is the happiness I knew when first I saw the Lord?" Even if we allow for the mental depression that ultimately overwhelmed the sensitive spirit of the writer and gave us the doleful poem "The Castaway" when the last hope flickers and dies, we cannot deny that there are lost memories of blessedness as well as triumphant experiences of new-found victories in our progress. The dull monotony of a uniformitarian process reaching from time into the vast recesses of millennial ages is strangely

foreign to the New Testament picture of clashing conflict, swift success, disastrous retreat and rapid advance again upon the hosts of the enemy. And, then, there is a vision of a completed task: "I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth, yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours: for their works follow with them" (Rev. xiv. 13, R.V.). They die that they may rest. The battle is over and the victory is won. "Their works follow with them." It is not the fact that they die which secures this blessing of rest. It is the fact that they die in the Lord.

A More Difficult Problem

But we enter on a much more difficult field of investigation when we seek to collate the scriptural evidence on what St. Paul calls "the redemption of the body". The hope of a resurrection of the body is continually set before us in the New Testament. The earliest form of the Apostles' Creed which is preserved in the baptismal service of the Church of England speaks directly of a "resurrection of the flesh". Bishop Dowden writes: "An error for which there is no excuse is the rendering 'the resurrection of the body' (*carnis resurrectionem*). It appears at least as early as the *Necessary doctrine and erudition for any Christian man; set forth by the King's Majesty of England* (1543). The Creed, as there given, was followed with only very slight variation in the Prayer Book of 1549, as part of the Catechism; and thence it passed into the text of Morning Prayer in the Prayer Book of 1552." (The Creed was ordered to be said, but was not printed in Morning Prayer in 1549.)

Jerome

"We learn, on the authority of Jerome, that certain followers of Origen admitted the resurrection of the *body,* but denied the resurrection of the *flesh.* Rufinus indeed remarks that whether we use "flesh" (*caro*) as in the language of the Creed (*secundum communem fidem*) or 'body' (*corpus*) as the Apostle Paul expresses it, we must believe as the apostle has defined. . . . In the office for Public Baptism in the Prayer Book of 1549, we find 'resurrection of the flesh', and in 1552 the same form is directed to be used in the Visitation of the Sick. In both places the same words are retained in our present Prayer Book. There are disadvantages in such a variation in the form of the Creed; and, considered as a translation of the Latin, 'resurrection of the flesh' should in all places be restored" (*Workmanship of the Prayer Book,* pp. 101–2). It is remarkable that in the appendix to the Shorter Catechism the Creed reads: "The resurrection of the body."

Dr. Zahn and the Apostles' Creed

Dr. Theodore Zahn entered the lists in defence of the Apostles' Creed when it was vigorously assailed in Germany in the latter part of the nineteenth century. His comments, translated by C. S. Burn and A. E. Burn, are worth recalling, if it were only for the fact that in *Crux Ansata* Mr. H. G. Wells, shortly before his death, once more gave currency to a crude superstition concerning "the resurrection of the flesh" which Zahn traces to the heathen of the late second century. It must be admitted that the painful literalness of the medieval theologians gave some ground for the conceit (though Aquinas' *Summa Contra Gentiles,* Bk. IV, c. lxxix–lxxxix, embody some very subtle suggestions as well as some rather startling ones). It is all the more refreshing, therefore, to discover that the Christians of Lyons in A.D. 177 had delivered themselves from an error that arrested the attention of Mr. H. G. Wells. There is nothing new under the sun. The early heathen misunderstood the Christians in the same way as Mr. H. G. Wells. Mr. Wells "is given to believe" that Gilles de Rais will benefit at the resurrection because he escaped burning and was hanged instead.

Now we turn to Theodore Zahn: "[Marcion] disputed the resurrection of the flesh, that is, of the body, and maintained that the soul only would be saved. St. Paul's judgment (1 Cor. xv. 50) that 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God' furnished him and others with their chief argument, but it was one which had been used by others before Marcion to controvert the real resurrection of the buried body of Jesus. In the time of Irenaeus all the opponents of the Christian doctrine of the resurrection appealed to this statement. It was also the hobby-horse of the Manichaeans. But many who pretend to be theologians in the nineteenth century ride it still more proudly than their predecessors when they maintain that the confession of the 'resurrection of the flesh' is in direct opposition to the doctrine of St. Paul. The Fathers of the Church from Justin to Augustine have already given the right answer. Only that which has fallen can rise again. It is, therefore, meaningless to talk of the resurrection of the dead when all that is meant by it is a continuation of the life of the Spirit when freed from the body by death. As Augustine says, with reference to St. Paul's statement, the chapter in which it is found should be read right through instead of deceitfully tearing a sentence from the context and holding fast to that alone. . . . The verse 1 Corinthians xv. 39 shows that St. Paul includes in the expression 'the flesh' the spiritual body of the Risen Christ and that of the Christians who attain to the resurrection. For he shows by examples taken from ordinary natural history that 'all flesh is not the same flesh' in the very passage in which he opposes the absurd consequences which would arise from the complete identity and similarity of the present

body with the future. He then exchanges the word 'flesh' for its synonym 'body', and shows how, even in this world, the most varied changes of glory may exist in bodily appearance. All this must be taken into account in speaking of the resurrection of the dead. A spiritual body, a body of flesh that has been changed and transfigured by the spirit, is, according to St. Paul, to be looked for at the return of the Lord for those Christians who shall be living upon the earth, as well as for the dead. . . . It cannot be said that the expression 'resurrection of the flesh' which is founded on the Bible [Zahn refers to Luke xxiv. 39; Acts ii. 26, 31], and which is familiar in the Creed, ever gave rise to serious misapprehension. The Church of Lyons records, with the calmness born of the faith which has overcome the world, that in the year 177 the heathen persecutors burnt the bodies of the martyrs and threw their ashes into the Rhine. The chroniclers add only: 'This they did as though they could overcome God and rob the martyrs of the new birth (of their bodies). They did it, as they say, that they might have no hope of the resurrection in the confidence of which they have introduced a new and a strange religion amongst us, despising torments and ready to face death with joy. Now let us see whether they will rise again, and whether their God will help them and deliver them out of our hands'. . . . The preachers who accept that formula and comment on it do not neglect to remind us that the body which we hope for is a spiritual body, raised above all the meanness and weakness of this present life" (*The Apostles' Creed,* pp. 206–12).

Dr. McGiffert on the Lyons Martyrs

It is rather interesting to notice the comment by Dr. McGiffert on the same incident, illustrating, as it does, that we all see what we are looking for in ancient documents unless we place our critical faculties under severe discipline. Dr. McGiffert writes: "These words [of the Lyons' chroniclers] show us how much emphasis the Christians of that day must have laid upon the resurrection of the body (an emphasis which is abundantly evident from other sources) and in what a sensuous and material way they must have taught the doctrine, or at least how unguarded their teaching must have been, which could lead the heathen to think that they could, in the slightest, impede the resurrection by such methods as they pursued. The Christians, in as far as they laid so much emphasis as they did upon the material side of the doctrine, and were so solicitous about the burial of their brethren, undoubtedly were in large part responsible for this gross misunderstanding on the part of the heathen" (note in translation of Eusebius, Bk. V, 2, edited 1890).

A Strange Demand

It seems to ask rather much of early Christians that they should abandon inhumation which was widespread and resort to the more expensive method of cremation in order to convince their heathen neighbours that they were free from sensuous ideas concerning the resurrection of the body. It would also be difficult to anyone but a person trained like Dr. McGiffert to see how such a method would prove really effective. It is not easy to convince people like Mr. Wells that belief in a bodily resurrection does not compel us to prefer hanging to burning. We throw words about like missiles in the hope that one of them will reach their mark. The very fact that the old chroniclers dryly record that the heathen hoped they could overcome God and leave it at that, shows with what contempt they regarded this childish device. The witness of the text is indeed in favour of belief in the resurrection of the flesh, but makes totally against any idea that the early Christians believed that the integration of the present body was a necessary condition of a resurrection.

One Quotation

But at least what did enlightened Christians say? One quotation must suffice from the Octavius of Minucius Felix which Salmon dates A.D. 234, not so far removed from the martyrs of Lyons. "Do you think that if anything is withdrawn from our feeble eyes, it perishes to God? Every body, whether it is dried up into dust, or is dissolved into moisture or is compressed into ashes, or is attenuated into smoke, is withdrawn from us, but it is reserved for God in the custody of the elements. Nor, as you believe, do we fear any loss from sepulture but we adopt the ancient and better custom of burying in the earth" (Octavius in Cyprian's Works, vol. ii, T. and T. Clark's trans., p. 508).

Augustine's City of God

Indeed, to leap forward two hundred years, when we read Augustine's *City of God*, we are struck by the fact that while some of his arguments are more ingenious than convincing, he is free from striking puerilities that emerge in the captious objections of his heathen adversaries. It is from him that Aquinas draws largely and exhibits the same characteristics of subtlety and surprising naïveté. We are certain that, judged by the standards of their time, the Christian leaders, because of their faithfulness to Scripture, exhibit a firmer grasp on essential truth than any of their contemporaries. But even if they did not, the task that remains to us is to construct, as well as we can, the doctrine that reposes in the New Testament.

The Classical New Testament Passage

The classical passage dealing with the resurrection is 1 Corinthians xv. If we can interpret its message we have the key to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. We need to bear the circumstances in mind. The Corinthians prided themselves on their reasoning powers. They had accepted the Christian message, but they had not abandoned their Greek modes of thought. They were ready to accept the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. This seems to be involved in the apostle's argument (verses 1–11 recapitulate the evidence). But they refused to believe in the resurrection of those who believed in Christ. This, Paul shows, is absurd and inconsistent (verses 13–15). Then he returns with the triumphant message, "Now is Christ risen from the dead", and introduces at once the connecting link, "and become the firstfruits of them that are asleep". There is a definite relation between the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of believers.

Firstfruits

The use of the word translated "firstfruits" in the popular Greek of the time makes it difficult to employ always the word "firstfruits" as a correct translation, and it may be that Paul here employs the word in one of the various usages that are represented in the inscriptions. On the other hand, "firstfruits" is the usual application of the word in the LXX, and Paul's frequent quotation from the LXX is evidence that the Corinthians were familiar with it, as is also the existence of Judaizers among them. The meaning is obvious. Jesus Christ is the guarantee of the resurrection of all who are in Him. The later argument makes this clear beyond doubt. All in Adam die and all in Christ shall be made alive. But the fact that Jesus Christ went through death and rose again in His body makes it essential that the same experience should be ours. If the dead rise not, then there is no evidence of triumph over sin. Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.

Bodily Resurrection Essential

It is impossible to study the arguments of Paul without realizing that the rising of the body is no accident but the very essence of the Christian faith. Rob us of this certainty and the whole process of redemption is covered with uncertainty. Christ died and rose again. If He died for us He must also have risen again for us. Just as he does in Galatians, Paul here goes to the root of the problem before entering on a discussion of difficulties. It is a good way. Having thus established the relation of the believer to our Lord Jesus Christ, Paul asserts that His resurrection must result in our resurrection. He is the firstfruits of them that sleep.

The Objector's Problem

Forthwith the objector introduces his problem: "How are the dead raised up? And with what manner of body do they come?" It is worth noticing that the objector conceives that dead persons are raised. The frequent use of the word in the New Testament puts this beyond doubt. The same use prevails in the ordinary Greek speech of the day. It was no problem of survival after death that troubled the Corinthians. It was the raising of corpses. And this is given force by the second question: "With what manner of body do they come?" We can imagine the objector saying: "Here are the signs of decay. Here is a heap of dust or ashes. Here are bones crumbling to nothingness. Here are men devoured by wild beasts. What kind of body can they receive?" They were as literal as the Sadducees with their riddle of the woman with seven husbands. If St. Paul intended to refute their speculations born of hostility to the idea of a bodily resurrection by pointing out that the resurrection could take place without the need of a body, he would have said, we imagine: "Thou fool, thou hast not sown the immortal spirit. Why seek the living among the dead?" But he says nothing of the kind.

If we understand his argument at all, he acknowledges that the phenomenon of decay and consequent dissolution presents a problem. He admits the dead will come with a body, and addresses himself to the answer to that question as satisfying both heads of the problem. If the possibility of a body can be conceived, then the method of raising the dead presents no further difficulty.

A Possible Alternative Interpretation

Or perhaps here, as in the Epistle to the Galatians, Paul grapples first with the major problem and then answers the first question "How are the dead raised?" in the words: "For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. xv. 52). What, then, is the answer to the question "With what manner of body do they come (out of the grave)?" The first answer is most remarkable and well worth weighing carefully.

The Analogy of the Grain

Paul says: "Consider with me the analogy of sowing and reaping. Do not you yourself sow, and what you sow dies? Paul is here burdened by some expositors with a demand to enter on a botanical disquisition. The seed (we are told) does not die: it really germinates. But surely it is sufficient for his argument to reply with Alford: "Its life is latent in it: but is not developed into quick and lively action without the death of the deposited seed—i.e. its perishing, disappearing from nature." Or we might say with Dr. Finlay: "With a little sense,

the questioner might answer himself; every time he sows his garden plot, he assumes the principle denied in regard to man's material form, viz. that *death is the transition to a further life*—'that which thou thyself sowest is not made alive except it die' " (*Expositor's Greek Testament, in loco*). We are not quite certain, however, that this constitutes Paul's answer to the first question, as Finlay suggests. The "how" of resurrection is not contained in the ordinary experience of plant life but the fact of a type of resurrection is, and that seems to be the analogy that is pressed. Death can be the entrance into a new and different existence. At least it is so in nature. Any Irish farmer digging in his "praty" patch, who unearths a dead "skillawn" (the Irish equivalent for what is known as "the eye" in the divided tuber) hanging to the potato root in company with several excellent healthy tubers, can quite understand Paul. He would find it much more difficult to understand the botanist.

Paul's Second Point

But the argument continues in a remarkable way. Paul is determined to meet the objection fully. He is very emphatic in his second point. The thing you sow—it is *not* the body about to arise that you sow. There is a peculiar emphasis in the repetition of the verb for sowing and a significance also in the use of the verb for becoming. You sow expecting a return, but you sow in every case something different from the return you expect. And from your sowing there shall come into being that which you did not sow and yet which would not emerge had you not sown. It is scarcely possible to avoid the conclusions that, just as the Corinthians professed contempt for those who refused to eat meat offered to idols, so they professed contempt for believers in a bodily resurrection. We can imagine them making merry at the expense of the simple Christian and plying him with questions. "What will you have to eat to maintain your new body? Will you grow tired walking the golden streets?" The day of scoffers is not yet over and it had begun long before the time of the clever Corinthians. It is very remarkable to notice Paul's reply to what may well have been a popular satire on the resurrection: "Not that body which shall be." It will be as different from it as "bare grain", the naked seed of wheat, or any of the others, is different from the waving golden glory ready for harvest.

Calvin's Comment

Calvin has a wise comment here: "There are two parts in this similitude: first that it is not wonderful that bodies should rise again from corruption, since the same thing happens in the case of the seed: and next that it is not contrary to nature that our bodies should be endowed with new qualities, when from naked grain God produces

so many ears clothed with a wonderful workmanship" (*in loco*). It seems difficult to understand how such an explicit utterance, correctly interpreted by writers so widely separated as Minucius Felix, Chrysostom, and Calvin, could be regarded, as some modern writers profess to regard it, as a crude materialism which imagines a body rising from the grave with properties exactly similar to those which it had when laid to rest.

But Paul does not stop there. He presses the analogy further. He adds: "But God giveth it a body even as it pleased him"; or perhaps more clearly: "God giveth it a body as he willed." The change of tense is important. God, by an act of will, determined the relation between the seed sown and the body that should emerge. In accordance with that divine act of will He continues to give the germinating seed the body which is appropriate to it. Paul is anxious to rule out caprice. While there is a great difference between the seed sown and the new body that arises, it is a determined difference so arranged in the will of God that every seed receives its own body; "to each of the seeds a body of its own". Whatever may be the final issue of the controversy regarding the use of *ἴδιον*, it can scarcely mean here less than "a body peculiar to itself". This means that the argument assumes that the analogy of nature furnishes two remarkable features that make the resurrection appear reasonable. There is, on the one hand, a great difference betwen the new and the old, and on the other hand there is a divine purpose connecting the new and the old, so that the difference, far from being capricious, follows closely the law of the divine Creator.

Two Conditioning Facts

The resurrection body is conditioned by two facts. It is and must be the body of a man, since the seed sown is mankind, just as inevitably such a body as the body of "bare grain" must be wheat or some other kind of grain. And in the case under review it must be the body of a man in Christ. The new features that will characterize it are closely connected with that union with Christ our Lord by which we are made alive. So close is the connection that when we seek a sample of the new risen body we find it in the resurrection of Christ our Lord who has become the firstfruits of them that sleep. We cannot divorce the two sections of the verse. If it is true that we sow not that body which shall be, it is equally true that we sow the bare grain which must result in a definite body not only according to the will of God but according to His unchangeable will represented in the primitive command: "The herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth" (Gen. i. 11). It is tempting to wander off into the problems of Mendelism and the mystery of genes, but it is better to regard Paul as having

simply before his mind that reproduction is governed by fixed laws, and yet as such laws do not preclude differences, they are, as a matter of fact, exemplary of it. There is a strange perversity which refuses to take the argument of an author as he developed it and which insists on reading into it conceptions of other and later times.

A Common Fault

No book has suffered more from this perverse treatment than the Bible. The reason is perhaps found in the fact that its profundity keeps pace with its simplicity, so that all we have discovered leaves its messages as fresh as ever. They are illumined by the new light, and therefore it is a natural temptation to regard them as creating the light that illumines them. The better method is to regard the messages as simply true and therefore interpretable by all that is true.

Diversities of Flesh

Paul continues the argument by pointing to the diversity of flesh on earth. There are essential differences that can readily be perceived. Nor does the analogy stop there: "There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial." Attention has often been called to the change of the word "flesh" to the word "body" in this next illustration. Some rather precarious theories have been built upon this change. Relying on the general use of the word "body" for organized as distinct from unorganized aggregates, many expositors believe that Paul is speaking of angelic inhabitants of the "heavenlies". But it must be pointed out that if the word "body" is not used elsewhere in biblical Greek for any being except an animate being, it must also be noted that apart from this passage which is in dispute there is no specific statement attributing a continued possession of a body to angels. The "theophanies" of the Old Testament need not imply that angels normally have bodies, since the bodies which they assumed or in which they appeared were visible and sometimes tangible (see 1 Kings xix. 5; Gen. xix. 16; Acts xii. 7, 8). On the other hand, although there is more than one possible interpretation of Psalm civ. 4, yet its use in the Epistle to the Hebrews seems to point in the direction of immateriality.

Paul's Terminology

Again we have to notice that this is not the first time that Paul has changed his terminology in this argument. He attaches the word "body" to the new growth when the seed germinates. It would appear that he wishes to restrict the word "flesh" to the animal world and falls back on the more general term "body" when he ranges over the larger field of the vegetable world and the planetary and stellar universe. It seems still more remote from the purpose of his discussion

to credit him with countenancing the opinion of Philo and others that the stars are animated. It may be that some amongst the Corinthians had imbibed the idea of Aristotle that the celestial bodies are greatly superior to the terrestrial bodies and that Paul used this opinion, or at least as much of it as might be consistent with truth, to enforce his argument.

Paul's Guarded Treatment

But we cannot refrain from noting how guarded are Paul's expressions compared, say, with Aquinas, who finds evidence of perfection in the circular movement of the heavenly bodies and gives several reasons to prove that celestial bodies move and set in order inferior bodies (*Contra Gentiles,* lib. iii, c. 83). It is a pity that Father Rickaby excused himself from translating these passages on the ground that they were not now relevant. At least they would have helped to show the indebtedness of Aquinas to the Aristotelian physics. What a contrast, then, does this acute mind of the thirteenth century offer to the restrained and dignified message of Paul. Notwithstanding the important comments of Findlay, Farrar and Alford, which should by all means be consulted and considered, we cannot but think that J. K. Mozley is nearer the mark when he writes: "Are the heavenly bodies those of heavenly beings or (in our modern sense) sun, moon and stars? Since the word 'glory' seems to bind together 40 and 41 in such a way as to suggest that the glory of the heavenly bodies in 40 is spoken of more precisely in 41, the second explanation is to be preferred" (*A New Commentary on Holy Scriptures, in loco,* S.P.C.K.).

Uniformity in the Universe

It is tempting here also to expand and to draw attention to the wonderful uniformity existing throughout the whole universe. Dr. Milligan writes: "For aught we know, the particles of the body in this dour spot of earth may be of the same nature as they shall be in the bright home of heaven. There is no need to imagine that they must differ in essence; they may be only subject to a different law. Modern science throws light upon this supposition; and, by what it has revealed to us of the structure of the universe, may be even said to lend it a degree of probability which it might not otherwise possess. Spectral analysis favours the idea that, to the remotest systems of the infinite depths of space, the constituent elements of all created bodies resemble one another, while it has also shown that they are more or less the same as those of earth. Does anyone suppose that, considering the different relations in which these bodies stand to the centre of their own systems or to the systems rolling around them, the laws of relationship between them and all that moves upon their surface will also be the same? That cannot be. . . . Thus also with our bodies.

The laws of relation among their particles may change in the transition from the natural to the spiritual body; but it does not follow that the particles themselves must so change their nature as not to deserve the name of bodily particles at all. In its fundamental atoms the 'spiritual' body may be as truly a body as the 'natural' one" (*Resurrection of our Lord*, p. 20). We are tempted to pursue arguments of this kind, but we must not include them in the thesis of Paul. With a wise restraint he holds to facts and disregards theories to which Dr. Milligan so graphically directs attention. When Dr. Milligan wrote (1883), the world of science was prepared to accept the view that there were very many inhabited globes besides ours. It was most natural for Dr. Milligan to argue from such premises. But science has once more taken a turn in another direction. Thomas Aquinas offers philosophical reasons for holding that God made only one world of inhabited beings, and science, on entirely different grounds, now suggests that this is probably the fact in view of all observed phenomena.

But there is one point in Dr. Milligan's argument that can still be asserted with a measure of confidence. The constituent elements in the universe as revealed by spectral analysis exhibit an amazing measure of agreement. The "stuff" out of which sun and stars are made is found to be broadly the "stuff" that exists in this world of ours. And yet what different consequences result from rearrangement. But we can keep the argument of the epistle clear of any modern scientific assumptions if we so desire. There is the world as it appears to us, and while we retain our present powers of observation this position does not alter. We call this the phenomenal position. Though we may and should call scientific research to our aid, we must not forget the paradox that the phenomenal is really permanent. There are different "bodies", all with their particular "glory", manifested to us in the universe. The God who gives to the bare grain a pre-ordered body likewise disposes of the heavenly spheres. Paul, the rabbinical student, is not unmindful of the great message of Isaiah: "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth" (Isa. xl. 26).

All flesh is not the same flesh, star differeth from star in glory. Yet notwithstanding this wondrous panorama of ordered variety, the Corinthians were foolish enough to question the possibility of resurrection changes. To the robust mind of the apostle there is something so futile in their objection that he cannot refrain from calling its promoters senseless. The very order of nature cries out against the limited view that there can be no further transmutation and that bodies must be allowed to rot into nothingness with no hope of recovery such as the seed proclaims.

CHAPTER XIV

REVEALED MYSTERIES

The Message of Revelation

Having outlined his argument with consummate skill, Paul proceeds to give the facts of revelation which transcend experience but are not out of harmony with it. The resurrection of the dead finds some support from the fact that there appear manifold varieties in the physical world. As there are degrees of glory even in the starry heavens, we must expect degrees of glory in the earthly and heavenly conditions which, between them, make the whole of human experience.

Difficulty of Interpretation

There are several difficulties that arise in giving an interpretation of this passage. Some of them have been created by the ingenuity of modern commentators. Amongst these we may safely reckon "the heavenly man" theory of Beyschlag which carries us far away from the purpose of Paul's argument. Paul is seeking to justify the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body, not to create a body of theology concerning the incarnation. But there is nothing new under the sun. Osiander anticipated some of these theories. Calvin says of him: "Osiander, whose perverse ingenuity in futile notions is proved by his writings extending the image of God promiscuously to the body as well as the soul, confounds heaven and earth together. . . . Moreover, if the notion of Osiander be received, man was formed only to the type or exemplar of the humanity of Christ; and the idea from which Adam was taken was Christ, as about to be clothed in flesh; whereas the Scripture teaches in a very different sense, that man was 'created in the image of God'" (*Institutes,* Bk. I, Ch. XV, iii). Views such as Osiander's or Beyschlag's may justly be regarded as an importation from theological speculation into the text. They could only derive value from the fact that the whole tenor of the New Testament demanded such an expansion of meaning here. And that is not the case. We are not forced to adopt this interpretation. Indeed, there are many objections to it. We come more closely to terms with various methods of exegesis when we consider Milligan's rendering.

Dr. Milligan's Exposition

He objects to the Authorized Version and Revised Version rendering, "It is sown", and contends that the last clause of the reiteration (which sounds, says Robertson, "like the tolling of a bell" (*Grammar*

of the Greek New Testament, p. 429), should read: "There is sown a natural body; there is raised a spiritual body." In a note justifying this translation (*Resurrection of our Lord,* pp. 19, 245), he writes: "It will hardly be denied that the translation given is the true translation of the text. With the rendering of the English version, whether Authorized or Revised, there is nothing for the 'it' to refer to. The only subject capable of supplying a nominative to the verb is 'the resurrection of the dead' [I translate the Greek given by Milligan] of verse 42, which cannot be said to be sown in 'corruption' or 'weakness'." The importance of making the correct translation may be seen in the argument drawn from the passage by Hodge, among others (*Systematic Theology,* iii, p. 775), that "it is the same body that rises". The real argument of the apostle is that at the resurrection the body which rises, if in one sense, because it is *our* body, is the *same,* in another and most important sense it is a *different* body."

It seems strange that any readers of Paul could suggest as a nominative "the resurrection of the dead". Surely it makes nonsense of the passage to say: "The rising up is raised." It is clear that we have a very excellent example of rhetorical asyndeton in the passage. Paul reaches a climax of impassioned thought. He has, we may conjecture, before his mind the memory of the crucified and risen Lord. He is thinking of what he elsewhere calls "the body of humiliation" and "the glorious body". He is no slave to grammar, and assumes common sense in his readers. He moves in rapid staccato utterance. His point is "sown", "raised", and the contrast between them. Robertson calls the grammatical structure the "Gnomic Present" (op. cit., p. 866). It is true of all time—a logical rather than a historical presentation.

The Reason for Omitting the Nominative

As we read the passage the nominative is omitted for the sake of definite effect. There can be no doubt what it is. If we were to paraphrase we should read: "That which is sown is sown in weakness." Beza indeed wrote on this point: "I accept 'is sown' not as impersonal but that everywhere 'body' is understood which therefore I have expressed in the first place" (*in loco*). But Beza does not accept the construction which relates the subject to the later phrase "a natural body". But surely the words gain great force in English if we render "sown in weakness, raised in power" and carry on until we reach the sown thing that is a creature of corruption, dishonour, and weakness? It is the soulish body. What is this thing that is raised in incorruption, glory and power? It is the spiritual body. That the climax is reached in the words "natural body" in contrast to "spiritual body" is proved by the fact that Paul proceeds to develop his argument by giving evidence as to the existence of these two forms of bodily existence. This is strongly

emphasized by the Revised Text and Nestle's "If there is a natural body". Evidently Paul felt that the crux of the argument lay here.

With the agility of mind that readily perceives an objection, he imagines a Corinthian sceptic saying: "Ah, but what evidence is there that God will give the sown body a new frame, raising it in incorruption?" His answer is: "If there is a natural body there is a spiritual body." His proof is the relation of man to Adam and the relation of man, particularly the believer, to Jesus Christ. His appeal, then, is to the written records of the Old Testament. That establishes the Adamic connection. It also establishes the fact that the first man was of the earth. The new revelation in Christ makes clear the union with God which was the hope of the Old Testament.

Hodge and Milligan

Dr. Milligan is scarcely fair to Hodge in his quotation. The following extracts from the passage in *Systematic Theology* ought to make this clear. "It is our present 'mortal bodies', 'our vile body'; it is 'this corruptible', 'this mortal'; it is 'that which is sown', of which the resurrection and transformation is predicted and promised. Our resurrection is to be analogous to that of Christ; but in His case there can be no doubt that the very body which hung upon the cross, and which lay in the tomb, rose again from the dead. Otherwise it would have been no resurrection." But Hodge adds: "Our future bodies, therefore, may be the same as those we now have, although not a particle that was in the one should be in the other." It is strange that Dr. Milligan ignores these important statements and fails to recognize that Hodge was as deeply sensible of the differences between the corruptible body here on earth and the incorruptible body of heaven as he was. It is a strange lapse on his part.

The Point in Paul's Argument

The important point which Paul urges is that there is a wide difference between the resurrection body and the earthly body. This, he argues, is a fact of revelation rendered intelligible by the vast changes which material bodies are seen to undergo. The seed secures a body. There are varieties of flesh. The heavenly bodies are different in form from the earthly. But if we stopped there we would have only half the argument. Paul is equally insistent on continuity. While God gives a body as it hath pleased Him, He gives to every seed its own body.

Two Views Suggested

There are two views taken on this matter, neither of which seems wholly to conform to the apostolic presentation. It is contended by some that the spiritual body is being slowly formed within our present earthly bodies and will be released at death. Dr. Charles holds

(*Eschatology,* p. 453) that we have an instance of the apostle unconsciously holding the other view (to that which places the change at the parousia). As the grain of wheat, immediately on the death of the husk, bursts into the new plant, so in the death of the body the ego may be supposed to be clothed immediately with the spiritual body. But the apostle did not explicitly state this consequence of his illustration. The old eschatology dominated him still. We have three observations to make on this statement. It is very precarious to press an illustration in a writer beyond the point to which he carries it. Paul was arguing for the possibility of a resurrection rather than for the special manner of it. The second observation is that Dr. Charles's botanical illustration is not itself quite exact. The grain of wheat does not immediately burst into the new plant, nor does it wait for the death of the husk to germinate. The new vitality is a condition of the death of the husk. Paul was not pressing the biological law of reproduction, but if it is to be used against him, the greatest accuracy is demanded. The third observation is that Paul emphatically asserts that "the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed". It is much too mild a comment to say: "The apostle did not explicitly state this consequence of his illustration." The fact is that he stated the exact opposite. Not only so, but in Romans, when he is dealing with the operation of the Holy Spirit on the, as yet, unredeemed body, he regards it as securing the quickening of our mortal bodies—a future event which corrects the present condition in which the body is dead. If the new plant were to burst forth on the death of the old husk, then it ought to be in evidence now. Whether, therefore, he is dominated by the old eschatology or some other factor, Paul is explicit in declaring that the resurrection is future and takes place at the parousia.

The Second View Suggested

But we are told that in the interval that elapsed between the First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians Paul consciously broke with the old view and henceforth taught the resurrection to be the immediate sequel of departure from this life. We do not think it necessary to press this apparent contradiction. We can hardly believe that so far-sighted a teacher as Paul would not have before him the problem occasioned by the resurrection of our Lord into a new and heavenly condition after three days, and the contrast afforded by the body of Stephen left to decay in the tomb. Two alternatives present themselves to the thoughtful. The first is the Greek view, supported by the Corinthians, to which Paul takes strong exception. If the resurrection body is given at death, the Corinthians were largely right. But then why was our Lord at such pains to contrast His being, in resurrection, with a phantom state? Why invite the disciples to handle Him? The

other alternative is to accept the view that the final redemption of man is delayed until the parousia. This is the view that Paul adopts and for which he argues. We think that too wide an inference is drawn from the words: "We have a building of God." It is reasonable to regard the phrase, as Robertson does, as a futuristic present. He writes: "The condition is future in conception, but the conclusion is a present reality, so confident is Paul of the bliss of heaven" (*A Grammar of the Greek New Testament,* p. 1019).

A Comparison

Further, a comparison of 1 Corinthians xv and 2 Corinthians v does not justify the allegation of a different line of interpretation regarding the resurrection body. We have in both the idea that mortality is swallowed up of life (1 Cor. xv. 54; 2 Cor. v. 4). We have the thought that our new building is from God (1 Cor. xv. 38; 2 Cor. v. 1). We have in both the idea of enduement, the very same verb being employed (1 Cor. xv. 54; 2 Cor. v. 2–4). We have the same idea of a heavenly house (1 Cor. xv. 47, 48; 2 Cor. v. 1). In both passages there is a contrast with that which is earthly. In 1 Corinthians xv the resurrection of the dead and the change of the living takes place at the last trump. In 2 Corinthians v. 10 we are all made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ. When we bear in mind that the whole argument in 2 Corinthians v is compressed into about a hundred and fifty words, these striking resemblances become of very great value in helping us to understand the apostle. Then there is a phrase borrowed from the similar discussion in Romans: "We groan" (Rom. viii. 23; 2 Cor. v. 2), and, further, we have the earnest of the Spirit, which links the thought to Romans viii. 23, though in a slightly different form to Philippians iii. 21. These resemblances should be noted carefully. The language in 2 Corinthians v itself lends support to the idea that the thought of Paul has not altered.

The Unclothed State

What is the precise significance of the words: "If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked"? As frequently happens in such minute discussions, we find that the grammar of the passage is a matter of dispute. There has been much searching of heart at the use of the aorist instead of the perfect passive. Alford regards this as fatal to the interpretation of Grotius and others. "If we shall be found among the changed, not among the dead." Farrar, on the contrary, regards it as "the simplest and most natural of the multitude of strange interpretations with which the pages of commentators are filled" (*Pulpit Commentary, in loco*). Beza, on the other hand, is equally confident. He writes: "But, although Castellio refers this to those who are living and are comprehended in the judgment (concerning whom

see 1 Thess. iv. 16) it does not seem to me even to need refutation." The modern investigations into the Aorist tense show that its use does not raise an insuperable difficulty to Farrar's interpretation, although he himself was made to hesitate because of it. The text can mean: "If when we are clothed we shall not be found naked." That is to say: "We do not look to present ourselves for heavenly investiture in a naked condition. We are not anxious to strip off this mortal body, but, on the contrary, to be clothed upon." The Vulgate gives the idea that what is mortal may be absorbed by life. And this assertion of Paul is, on the view we have suggested, first indicated in verse 3 and elaborated in verse 4. On the interpretation offered by Alford and the American translators of the Vulgate, verse 3 means "seeing that we shall really be clothed and not naked". It is an emphatic denial of the Corinthian declaration that there is no resurrection of the dead. Our house from heaven will be a body, not a form of purely spiritual existence. But on either interpretation verse 4 carries forward the idea to suggest two alternative experiences. One, in which we would be "unclothed", which refers to the disembodied intermediate condition; the other, that we would be clothed upon, which refers to the experience of those who do not enter into any intermediate condition but are changed in a moment as the mortal puts on immortality. The inclusion of the thought of being found "naked" harmonizes the exposition with that given in 1 Corinthians, and renders the idea of a change of attitude less probable.

The New Condition Eternal

It has further been pointed out that Paul insists that the house from on high is not only in the heavens, but that it is eternal. If there is any change at the parousia, any accession of glory or of power, then it is to this culmination that our attention is directed and not to any condition that is to be supplanted. If Paul had indeed the idea of the attainment of a spiritual body at death, his language about being "unclothed" or "clothed upon" does not help his reader to catch that idea. As we read the passage there are three possible conditions in view. We are at present clothed with a mortal body. That body may be disintegrated—we must face the possibility. Whether this be so or not, it is certain we have a better dwelling-place which we shall assuredly occupy. It is because of the possibility of dissolution that the three conditions arise: (*a*) our present condition, clothed with a mortal body; (*b*) a future, but temporary, position in which we are stripped of our present clothing; (*c*) a future eternal condition in which we shall be clothed with our house from heaven. The second alternative is possible but less desirable. We long that the third and blessed condition should result without any stripping off of our present clothing. The body which we have is intractable, yet we do not wish to lose it. Rather, we long for its transformation that it may be fashioned like unto the

glorious body of our Lord. If this marvellous experience takes place at the moment of death, then the whole protest about being unclothed seems meaningless. Once, indeed, Paul uses the same verb, which is here rendered "dissolved", and expresses his desire "unto the dissolving and being with Christ" (Phil. i. 23), and on that occasion he adds: "for it is very far better." But that declaration is similar to that which he states in the context here: that to be absent from the body is to be at home with the Lord. In neither place does he suggest that the resurrection condition is attained at the moment of dissolution. On the contrary, the whole tenor of his message is that, while blessing comes to the departing soul, the blessing of being with Christ, the final consummation outweighs every other blessing so much that our desire should be to experience no interval between death and resurrection. If such an interval should be appointed for us, we are confident, since we know that our exile from the body is only temporary and during that exile we are with Christ. But if such an interval does not take place, we pass at once into the eternal blessedness of the resurrection glory.

Salmond's Interpretation

We think that Salmond most truly represents the apostle's thought. He writes: "What can be in view here but the *resurrection body* in the completeness of the superiority and the permanence in which it contrasts with the failing, transient body of earth? The idea of an *interim* body, with qualities intermediate between the earthly body and the glorified body, is, as Meyer justly observes, something entirely strange to the New Testament. That it cannot be in view here is made plain by the simple fact that the body of which Paul speaks is described as *eternal.* If it is said that 'we have' it, it is also said, in the same breath, that it is 'in the heavens'. So that what is meant is not that we assume it at once at death, but that it is our certain possession, an inheritance prepared for us. It is reserved for us in heaven now, and it will become ours in actual possession hereafter. But that *hereafter* is not identified either with the event of death or with the period of the intermediate state. . . . The resurrection life and the presence of Christ are before him. With this knowledge he can look with confidence even to dissolution and to the defeat of his expectation of witnessing Christ's return. The passage may bear upon the hope of an immediate entrance into the joy of the Lord's presence after death. It says nothing of a special order of body for the intermediate state" (*Christian Doctrine of Immortality,* p. 453). Salmond, in a note, refers to Dean Plumptre, who supports this view in the *New Commentary for English Readers.* It is necessary to be continually on our guard against confusing possible interpretations with the actual language of Scripture. We think Salmond is justified in linking the parable of the unjust steward with that of the rich man and Lazarus and saying of both: "The

purpose . . . is a certain moral lesson; and that moral lesson is one touching the meaning of conduct in the present existence, the broad and simple lesson of the penalty of a selfish life" (*Christian Doctrine of Immortality*, p. 278).

A Common Fallacy

The common fallacy into which we are drawn by our limited conceptions of trial and judgments as they operate in human affairs is to imagine that the eternal judgment of God creates a new situation for the souls subjected to it. We may call this "the cold storage" theory of the last things. God is supposed, on this theory, to keep souls in an intermediate place and then to call them forth in order to decide their final destiny. But does judgment decide the fate of either the believer or the unbeliever? We would answer by saying judgment does not decide the fate: it simply pronounces it to assembled men and angels. Either our Lord or John, in commenting on our Lord's message to Nicodemus, says: "He that believeth on him is not judged: he that believeth not hath been judged already" (John iii. 18, R.V.). There is no need to wait for the great assize. Already men carry their acquittal or their condemnation with them in their attitude to the Son of God. Yet our Lord quite plainly says: "The word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John xii. 48, R.V.). It is not necessary in order to reconcile these two sayings, to postulate two contrasting streams of thought, one linking itself with an old eschatology and the other introducing a wholly different conception. The man who rejects Christ and refuses to keep His words carries his judgment with him. In the eyes of God he is already condemned. But there is to be a manifestation of the Son of God which will throw into clear light the perversity which rejected Him, and which will manifest with equal clearness the righteousness of God in justifying those who believed on Him. This is the judgment.

Sins Done Aforetime

St. Paul has the same idea with reference to the forgiveness of sins for which no apparent provision had been made. God declared His righteousness in the propitiation of Jesus Christ our Lord. What had been previously hidden from the eyes of men was now manifested. If we get rid of the idea that the last judgment is intended to determine a destiny for the individual, hitherto unknown to God, and substitute for it the idea that the last judgment is, if we may so phrase it, the cosmic vindication of God's ways, then all difficulties disappear.

A Cosmic Significance

There are some hints of a cosmic significance in the judgment which may be considered profitably. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we read:

"God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect" (Heb. xi. 40, R.V.). The verb used here means strictly "to arrange beforehand". The Old Testament saints had the same spirit of faith as we have, yet they received not the promise. Vaughan suggests that there is a double significance in the words: "*God defers their consummation that He may not shut us out.* That is the main thought. But a secondary thought lies in 'the better thing'. He gives us a *present* possession in the gospel of Christ superior to that which was theirs in life. *They hoped—we both hope and have*" (*Commentary, in loco*). When we consider the delay in the process of redemption which leaps to the eye in the New Testament, we find at least a partial explanation in the duty of bearing witness. "Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you" (Phil. i. 24). If the renewed souls were immediately clothed with their house which is from on high, the means of extending the kingdom would have to be other than they are. There is a cosmic significance in our sojourn here. May we not at least tentatively suggest that the delay in resurrection has a similar reference to the delay imposed on the Old Testament saints? The mystery of "the times of the Gentiles", so frankly given to us in the parable of the wild olive tree in Romans xi, points in the same direction. The call of the individual is in fulfilment of a still mightier movement, when the "kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ". That movement passes through stages in all of which there is an increasing weight of glory. It is not inconsistent with that development to suggest that, as our entrance into grace secured in some way the completion of the blessedness of Old Testament saints, so it lies in the providence of God that we as well as they should tarry till the consummation before we enter with all the company of heaven, the full number of the redeemed, into that fullness of blessing which is then made possible and signalized to us by the resurrection from among the dead. In view of these hints we attain to a definite conviction that not till the parousia will the resurrection body of the individual be received. The new heavens and the new earth will have their counterpart in the new body. This is as far as we can go with the information supplied by revelation, and it becomes us to be humble and reverent.

Karl Barth's Suggestion

We can accept the message of Karl Barth: "We have, strictly speaking, absolutely no knowledge of the resurrection of the body, and eternal life, beyond what the Word of God tells us, and it tells us that Jesus Christ has arisen from the dead and lives eternally with God and that His resurrection and eternal life *are* our future also, because He is our Lord, the Lord of Creation and of our whole existence, both our souls and bodies, and because we belong to Him and not to

ourselves" (*The Knowledge of God and the Service of God*, p. 241). Karl Barth claims that "when we associate ourselves with [the old Scotch Confession] we must at the same time remain free in relation to it—free to give heed to the Scripture itself" (op. cit., p. 12). In pursuance, doubtless, of his freedom, he offers no exposition of the striking words: "The dead shall arise incorruptible, and that in the substance of the self-same flesh that every man now bears" (op. cit., 233). It is the thought of "The Eternal, our God" stretching "out his hand on the dust" that creates difficulties for the dialectical theologians as well as for men who prefer the writings of Streeter and Charles. The doctrine has been refined away so that no real doctrine of the body, in any intelligible sense, remains.

Keeping the Balance

It is the duty of the Bible student to keep the balance between these opposing tendencies. We would venture to declare that the New Testament looks to a final restoration of the world, when God shall gather out of His kingdom everything that defileth. This great event will be the true consummation of all things, the solemn enthronement of our Lord as King of kings and Lord of lords. It will be accompanied by a manifest declaration to all men of God's righteous dealings in all ages. There will be a mighty panorama of history. The multitudes buried in the earth or swallowed by the sea will be there. Death and the unseen world will release their inmates, even though no trace of them can be found in earth or sea or air. The great army of the assembled multitudes of earth will stand before God. Then, indeed, in masterly completion, we shall "rise to the height of the great argument, assert eternal Providence, and justify the ways of God to man". It will be no vision, but a sublime eternal reality.

An Appropriate Manifestation

Surely it is fitting that this great masterpiece of the long travail of God Himself for the souls and bodies of men should have its own appropriate and special manifestation. We find it in the coming of the Son of Man like the lightning which shineth from the East to the West. We find it in the voice of the Archangel and in the trump of God. But, with all deference to the earnest students who see a different consummation, we also find it in the investiture of the dead with the cloak of their immortality, the resurrection body adapted in the case of the saints to that eternal abiding-place so long foretold, marking the completion of the order of grace and its harmony with the order of nature. We find it, too, in the investiture of the impenitent with a resurrection body which exhibits the features of indurated rebellion, making the possessors fit denizens of the lower parts and associates of the devil and his angels. There is a consummation which

gathers all in one, and for this we earnestly look. In all these matters theologians differ. Martensen takes a different view from Meyer, and inclines to the idea that the "nakedness" of the intermediate state is a relative and not an absolute nakedness. He emphasizes the desire of the apostle to be "clothed upon" and refers to an accession of bodily power at the resurrection. As usual with theologians who have a doubtful case, he assures us: "Paul expressly teaches that, though we do not possess the complete fullness and perfecting of our being in the realm of the dead—because in death we are unclothed and shall not be clothed again till the second coming of the Lord—yet we are not entirely naked in the intermediate state but are clothed upon" (*Christian Dogmatics,* T. & T. Clark, 1888, p. 460). Martensen favours the view that the believer is in a special receptacle different from heaven. He writes: "As Christ is present in *spirit* even in the realm of the dead, the believer knows that death to him is not loss, but gain (Phil. i. 21)." It seems an obvious answer that Christ is present in Spirit to the believer now who, nevertheless, is said to be "absent from the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8), therefore the new experience of being "at home with the Lord" must refer to the presence of the Lord in body as well as in Spirit.

Dean Luckock and the Westminster Divines

Dean Luckock, who is never anything if not downright, declares roundly: "The Westminster divines committed an egregious blunder in practically obliterating the Intermediate State and showed the most profound ignorance both of Scripture and of primitive literature" (*The Intermediate State,* p. 26). It is not surprising that a man of the rather vehement temper of Dean Luckock should deprecate the fact that the Authorized Homily of his own Church declares: "As the Scripture teacheth us, let us think that the soul of man, passing out of the body, goeth straightway either to heaven or else to hell, whereof the one needeth no prayer, and the other is without redemption" (*Concerning Prayer,* III Pt. *ad fin.*). Dr. C. H. H. Wright, who incidentally convicted Dean Luckock of more than one "egregious blunder", regards the language of the homily as "an accommodation to popular modes of expression" which can be defended "substantially by reference to 2 Corinthians xii. 2. St. Paul there speaks of "*the third heaven*" which is perhaps identical with "*Paradise*" (2 Cor. xii. 4) (*The Intermediate State,* pp. 313–14, note). Dr. Moule goes somewhat further and tells us: "Paradise in Scripture, far from being locally distinguished from heaven, the upper world, appears as in it and of it. See 2 Corinthians xii. 2–4; Revelation ii. 7 with xxii. 2, 5. And compare, for example, Acts vii. 55, 56 with 59; and Philippians i. 23 with Colossians iii, 1–3" (*Outlines of Christian Doctrine,* p. 98).

One Inference from Reticence

One inference can be drawn from the reticence of Scripture. That inference is that the weight of its authority is thrown on the parousia and not on the intermediate state. If we were tempted to hold that the resurrection body becomes the immediate possession of the disembodied soul, that tendency would be corrected by the fact that there is, from the beginning, a focus of attention on the resurrection. Another important fact has to be taken into consideration. Throughout the whole of the New Testament the doctrine of the resurrection is associated closely with the resurrection of our Lord. In Romans, the Spirit who raised up Christ from the dead quickens also our mortal bodies. In Corinthians, Christ is the firstfruits and we are made alive in Him. In Colossians, we shall appear with Christ in glory. In Hebrews, Christ as our Forerunner has entered in for us into heaven. Inferences could readily be drawn from the language of Ephesians, when we are said to be seated in the heavenlies with Christ our Lord and where the Church is said to be His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. But when we study the arguments of the apostles concerning the relation of our Lord's death to His resurrection life they assume, with one consent, that there was an appreciable interval between death and the investiture with the body of the resurrection.

Peter's Speech

This is brought out most forcibly in Peter's speech in the Acts of the Apostles. He bases his argument on what some would call the old eschatology. Quoting Psalm xvi. 10, he presses the triumphant conviction, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell", and interprets it to mean that God hath loosed the pains of death for our Lord because it was not possible that He should be held of death. To establish his argument Peter contrasts the case of David and of our Lord Jesus Christ. David's sepulchre is with us—clear evidence that he saw corruption—but the reference in the psalm is not to David. David, being a prophet, spoke beforehand of the resurrection of Christ. This resurrection has a twofold effect. "His soul was not left in hell", or, as the Revised Version renders it: "Neither was he left in Hades nor did his flesh see corruption." The contrast is till further emphasized by the statement: "David ascended not into the heavens." If, therefore, the resurrection body is bestowed immediately at death, the whole argument has to be so completely remodelled as to leave nothing of its original character. There is no special significance in Hades. It becomes, on this theory, the abode of fully embodied saints who will be present, indeed, at the last day, but will not need to be "clothed upon". The strength of this parallel between our Lord and His saints may be gathered from the indelible impressions, made in the mind

of early believers, which gave special emphasis to "the third day", securing its insertion in the old creed of the second century. It seems impossible to hold that during the three days our Lord was in possession of His resurrected body. But if He entered into a new experience when His body was raised transfigured from the tomb, then for us who die there is also an interval. We gather from St. Peter's words that it will be much longer. In many cases our flesh, like that of David, shall see corruption. In what condition are those who thus see corruption? They are left in Hades. They are in an intermediate state.

Dean Luckock's Error

The statement made by Dean Luckock, to which we have referred, that the Westminster divines obliterated the intermediate state, is singularly unfortunate, not only because of the words of the Church of England homily, but because the very passage to which he refers distinctly speaks of the righteous "waiting for the full redemption of their bodies", and again as "souls separated from their bodies". No thoughtful reader can fail to perceive that this, so far from obliterating the intermediate state, distinctly asserts its existence. Of course, like the homily on "The Fear of Death", which Dean Luckock quotes, and the homily "Concerning Prayer", which he does not quote, the Westminster divines obliterated Dean Luckock's intermediate state, but that is not quite the same thing. But the facts concerning our Lord's resurrection compel belief in an intermediate state in the case of the Lord Himself no less than in the case of believers who die. As Orr puts it: "That the belief of the apostles and first disciples was really belief *in a true physical resurrection,* in other words, a resurrection of the body of Jesus from the grave, it seems impossible, in face of the evidence, to doubt" (*The Resurrection of Jesus,* p. 35). But, if that be so, the assumption of the body that lay in the grave, however great the changes that body had undergone, leaves us with three days in which the body had not been assumed.

The Hadean State

It is an interesting question as to what means of expression His human spirit, divorced from its earthly tabernacle, may have discovered in the unseen world, but it does not alter the fact that such a means of expression, whether it can claim the title body or not, is different, and entirely distinct from, the body which belonged to our Lord's resurrection state. If we are to argue, as the apostles undoubtedly did, from the analogy between our Lord's resurrection and ours, that ought to settle the question finally. If indeed, as the philosophical aspect of the question would suggest, the body is at once a form of expression and a revelation of limitation, it would follow that even in the abode of

Hades there would be something analogous to our earthly body. We can conceive that the limitation of space may yield to some other limiting conception. We speak after the analogy of space when we speak of being with Christ; it may be as reasonable to speak after the analogy of body when we think of our limitations. We may even contend that the parable of the rich man and Lazarus justifies the use of language of this sort. The rich man is pictured with a tongue, though we are told he was buried. Lazarus in Abraham's bosom is pictured with a finger. But when we have claimed all this, standing at the very confines of our knowledge, we are compelled to acknowledge that the state of "the spirits of just men made perfect" is not the last stage in the great drama of redemption but that we shall be restored to a glorified body which has a closer identity with our present body than any limiting vehicle of expression in the waiting period can possibly have. The Bible is silent regarding our speculations as to the body being the organ at once of expression and the medium of limitation, except in the picturesque details in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

A Definite Message

But the Bible is very definite as to the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, and compares it to the resumption of His body by our Lord when on the third day He rose again. It is not for nothing that the Early Creed records our faith in "the resurrection of the flesh" as the last great climax in the ascending scale of the Christian's hope.

We conclude our studies at this point, not because there is not much more to be said, but because the limit of our space has been reached and it would not be possible to include the wider subject of eschatology generally and the Lord's return into a short compass. We commend to the notice of students of Scripture the great importance of close investigation. It is only thus that "the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works". We trust that the foregoing may awaken a thirst for deeper knowledge and confirm the readers in their most holy faith.